



ALMOST IN CAMERA

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THE AUTHOR.

*[Frontispiece.]*

# ALMOST IN CAMERA

*By*

PERCY BROWN

LONDON

HOLLIS AND CARTER

1944



*First published 1941*

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN FOR  
HOLLIS AND CARTER LTD.

# DEDICATION

TO

A. J. B. P.

*Castle Lodge,  
Ludlow.*

DEAR ALISTAIR,

I am dedicating ALMOST IN CAMERA to you in gratitude for your inspiring efforts in producing it during these difficult days. I take this opportunity of clearing the good name of your world-wide clan of a colossal and growing slander. There might have been one mean Scotsman in the dark ages from whom the music-hall comics derive material for their hoary humour, but although I have wandered through four continents I have never met one. On the other hand, wherever I have met Scotsmen I have enjoyed their stimulating company and co-operation.

Very sincerely yours,  
PERSE.



## ASIDE

THE LAST THREE years of the Great War, spent in German prisons, left me with a curious complaint, fear of going to sleep! No matter how I tired myself I slipped back into dreadful nightmares. I was either back behind barbed wire or in prison. I woke up sweating, the raucous shouts of the soldier warders still in my ears.

The doctor said that my experiences had taken me to the borderland of madness. I must exert a will to free myself from the prison dreams. By 1919 I could fight my way out of a dream. Hard work did it. I still shudder at the memory of seeing some of my friends going mad. Many died. Some committed suicide. At least one lingers on in a London madhouse.

When I heard the first Alerts of this war, followed by the scream of bombs, my old trouble returned. Again I dreamt dreams so real I could not waken. The twenty years of freedom seemed just a tantalising dream. Back came the mud and misery and the shouts of warders still rattling round the prison passages. When we were prisoners we dreamt of being home. Morning brought cruel awakenings.

Nor have I ever taken dope. Acute spinal pain forced me near to it. A doctor friend smuggled out a syringe and morphine in a biscuit tin. Do without it if you can, was his underlined advice. Several times when the agony became unbearable I fingered the fascinating little instrument with its thread-like needle and lit the tiny burner for heating the morphine. I was fortified by the feel of it and hung back while the pain passed its peak. And so I resisted until the Armistice. When I got back home I returned the instrument in its original packing to its owner, Doctor Neville Wood, and thanked him for his unprofessional act of charity.

Back in England, my friends sometimes gave me a queer look. Like the doctor, they said I was a "bit out of centre", as they put it in Shrewsbury.

So here is the middle slice of my story, not in graceful design of fine mosaic, but a track of crazy paving.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### BACK TO THE BENCH OR ON TO FLEET STREET?

I WAS BACK WHERE I STARTED. After enjoying the best and worst of most things, I must go back to work. I unpacked my tools, filed my saws, ground my chisels and plane-irons and hoped for a job in my old shop, Treasure's of Shrewsbury.

I was recovering from my war experiences, but still my chances seemed small when I thought of the thousands of fit men already asking for their jobs after years of fighting.

Could I stand up to the competition at the joiner's bench or on the building, especially at Treasure's, where you worked right under the eyes of the foreman? My mother and I talked these things over. A small business was now out of the question. Funds were low. What about the Press, the real Fleet Street? Was there no opening there? Why go backwards? she asked. Not for me, now that the real Press-men were back from the war. Fancy trying to compete with their technique, accuracy of distance, judgment to a split-second exposure! I regarded Press-photography as a mystery craft the secrets of which are rarely divulged. I must be content with my run of luck, now ended, in being able to bluff my way, with war-luck, into a game I did not understand.

My mind ran back past the years since I left Shrewsbury—a wonderful holiday. Even war was a holiday from work. I thought of the three glorious years in San Francisco, where I had gone to work before the Great War, rebuilding that city after its devastating earthquake, the exciting skating days when I became a professional performer during the craze of 1908, the tennis tournaments and the big hotels. Not knowing it, I was at the cross-roads. One way led straight back to the carpenter's bench, drudgery, obeying orders and never giving any, and no travelling. The other way, although I did not know it then, led to the show-places of the earth, through palaces, meeting kings and queens, even living and eating with them, expeditions to the Arctic, the Tropics, more wars and revolutions, through grand hotels where you live on the top note. For everything on this



road there is nothing to pay if you work on a newspaper. And the wage is a thousand a year.

A telegram decided it. When was I going to see him? asked Mr. William Will, director of Graphic Publications. He had already published some revolution pictures and stories I had brought back from Germany.

"There, they *do* want you," said my mother excitedly.

I still felt I could not bluff past friends into the real Fleet Street: too much technique necessary. Besides, my mother had been alone long enough. Even if I could not get a steady job at the bench I could take on odd jobs while I got back on my feet, but she still stuck to her view, failing to realise that I was not feeling strong enough for the plunge.

"Don't lose your nerve. Go and see them, even if they only want to say 'Good morning'. They may have just the right job for you, and you look as well as the rest in your new suit," she added naively, but with her usual optimism.

So I went to London and felt almost normal as I breathed the clean air and kept pace with the fast-stepping Londoners. Freedom to stride about the streets without restriction was still an unforgettable novelty. I was received at Tallis House as if I had won the war, instead of having photographed only a bit of it. My chance then was like a roulette ball trembling on the knife-edge partition between a winning and losing number. Yes, there is such a thing as luck. I was at the beginning of a wonderful holiday, years of care-free travelling at high wages, saloon passage everywhere, and all expenses paid. I was never ordered about. My jobs—now assignments—were suggested, rarely ordered.

The directors took me to lunch and gave me steaks and red wine. They were teetotallers, but they knew what a prisoner needed. I studied their friendly faces. They watched me eat a marvellous lunch. I had not tasted steak for years. They were very matey and discussed several newspaper subjects, still a strange world to me. They invited my opinion on foreign affairs! I looked closely at them to see if they were pulling my leg.

I began to think. Surely here was a chance of dodging floor-walloping and sash-slogging. Could I get away with it? Instead of working my way with a kit of carpenter's tools, it would suit me better to see the world with a camera. They certainly thought I was good. Philip Gibbs, with whom I covered some scenes of

the war, had got me a temporary job and put in some more good work for me. Could I learn as I went along and still deliver the goods? I listened carefully and decided I would have a go at anything to get a real start in Fleet Street.

After lunch we returned to Tallis House. I was introduced to the firm's chief photographer, Alfred Abrahams. Press-photography was all right in the summer, but it was the dull days of winter which beat the novice; he said this with relish while giving his hands a dry wash.

Alfred was right, for in most cases London, with its fogs and broken light, is the worst place in the world for cameramen. Most of the winter sporting and social events end in a bad light. Alfred was discouraging. Mr. Will watched the effect on me and chatted as if I were already on the staff. Would I like a roving commission about Europe? In the aftermath of the Great War there was plenty of material for pictures and articles. There was no need for me to plunge into the rough and tumble of routine work among men who had spent their lives photographing the same subjects in the same way. New ideas were wanted by newspapers, now untrammelled by the past, he went on. He was trying to save me from competition with the old hands.

The Paris Peace Conference was about to begin. Would I like to cover it? I said I would, having no idea how to go about this colossal subject. Mr. Will asked Alfred to show me round the building, and especially the dark rooms. He thoroughly enjoyed himself with the staff at my expense. How they roared with laughter when they examined my camera fitted with a seven-inch lens instead of a six-inch! I encouraged them by asking innocent questions and so we got along very nicely.

If ever I thrilled about anything it happened when I was given a job on the staff of Graphic Publications, which included the *London Graphic*, the *Daily Graphic* and the *Bystander*. To be with such a team was like sailing under the flag of a very happy ship.

To me Press-photography never became work. I could not believe money could be earned so easily. During the last twenty-five years I have taken thousands of photographs, and no two jobs were alike. Every job was an experiment and an experience. Even small jobs like weddings were different. There was always a new angle: the long veil caught up in the wind or the little page taken short at the critical moment. I took on every kind of

job, night and day. Even when I was not abroad each job provided a day out for me.

What surprised me most was the amount of money and trouble editors devoted to getting exclusive pictures. Foreign adventure stories were different, for these provided material worth the money, I thought. Our lives were regarded merely as part of the cost. This suited me so long as I was allowed to live in luxury and see my name on the front page. On a job I went all out and was never handicapped by permits and instructions. I developed a special technique to cope with people who took upon themselves the duty of impeding pressmen.

Even when I have taken bits of pictures costing hundreds of pounds, the editors seemed satisfied when the result was exclusive. The job itself offered opportunities of making money on the side. Having starved once or twice in my life, the experience made me enjoy my food when I got it. I have a weakness for spending money on ordinary things. When I had no car I covered my jobs in taxis. I still cannot see an empty one pass me—my cheapest form of pleasure.

When my bank manager bluntly informed me that I was in the "red", I looked round and found that serial-writing and publicity were the best means of paying off my overdraft: more about this later. Few of the following incidents are connected except by the home background. Journalism gave me a free front seat everywhere. I might be in Buckingham Palace in the morning and in a Chinese dope den in the evening.

When working a camera I was close to life all the time, for a camera-man must be right on the spot. If you miss the incident it has gone for ever as far as you are concerned. A reporter can be late and still get his story. Considering the varied circumstances, it was a miracle to me that I never missed a picture. Friends and good luck got me through when I myself have failed.

The best camera-men were not fashion-plates. But they were tough. Their first quality is reliability. They get their picture even if they have to fight for it. For one black period this was more the rule than the exception. You had to take snubs from the snobs and a battering from police. During the Tonypandy coal strike a policeman knocked me out for more than the count. And I was only flash-lighting the police bludgeoning the miners.

But it is all in the day's work. If you work for a good firm life is a bowl of cherries. The boss stands by you, and a king

could have no more loyal henchman. When you have the confidence of the firm you can do no wrong; you get your pictures how you like, but you get them, and nothing matters. If anyone comes to the office complaining of the behaviour of a camera-man, the boss assumes the complainer has tried to obstruct his man.

Mr. Will knew the game. Sometimes he called me to his office to enquire what happened on this or that job. Never a complaint have I had from higher up. Sometimes it was life or death, and if you had a weak office behind, you would not struggle. On the old *Daily Graphic* they had such faith in me I could never let them down. The funny thing is that without my camera I am a coward. When I see or hear shell-bursts near me I duck and run. Fortified by my camera I stay and get the pictures.

So off I went to Paris—a nice quiet job, the Peace Conference, which wrote the script for the world's greatest drama, now showing.

When I reached Paris I found that the preliminaries of the Conference had started and hundreds of pressmen were already there. Scores of camera-men, all strangers, were in the bars and restaurants. I spent a day trying to chum up with them, but I was not yet one of the lads. They worked, drank, ate and lived in cliques. I could not make one friendly contact.

Bill Curnock, our news-editor, had given me an introduction to his brother, George Curnock, Northcliffe's special correspondent, whom I met at the Hotel Louvre. He soon dropped me when his photographer whispered that I, too, was to take pictures. It did not occur to me to seek official help. So bewildering was the whole thing that I did not know where to start. I saw hundreds of Government officials coming and going, and wondered what they were doing. And what beautiful girls they had on their staffs! There was glamour here; good material for pictures when I had done some serious stuff. I scanned the English newspapers, but as yet that army of camera-men had not begun to function.

Anyway, I decided to start on something, so I got a list of the British delegates. I called on Lord Hardinge, Sir William Tyrrell, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Balfour, President Wilson and Clemenceau, who seemed to be waiting for me. I was received at once. This

appeared too easy. To photograph them was another matter, but I had to practise on someone. My eyes being weak after my German prison experiences, I could not focus accurately, so I tied knots at yard intervals on a five-yard piece of tape. Sir William Tyrrell of the British Foreign Office was my first victim. He looked at me queerly when I asked him to hold the third knot between his teeth. He was to let go before I took the photograph. It was a new method, I explained, to save the precious time of the delegates. He believed me. So did the rest. Their pin-sharp portraits made perfect Press pictures, for of course the focus was dead right.

I covered several personalities by this method, and could not go wrong. I was praised by both office and subject. When the pictures appeared, the other camera-men went to the Press bureau to find out who had taken them. Being an outsider, I did not know that an official permit to do a massed sitting was to be given. A search was made, and I was caught by Tom Breslin using my comic-string method on Orlando at the Italian headquarters.

How the lads laughed and pulled my leg! Anyway, they bought me a drink and got me a room in their hotel. I felt I was getting in right at last. Billy Gore remembered my letting him come in my rowing-boat to escape from Ostend as the Germans entered in 1914. Although they tried to keep me on the lead, I still managed to send off a few exclusive pictures and some small articles, such as "Peeps at the Paris Peace Conference".

I knew nothing about night photography. So I went below to practise on the Signals Department, set up in the cellars of the Astoria Hotel. Without a permit I began to flash the staff and their complicated equipment—miles of wire and a mass of instruments. I blew off flashes on the operators at their jobs, not minding the smoke and powder. The crisis came when I tried to take a general view with an overcharge of flash-powder. The explosion shook the building.

Scotland Yard men rushed downstairs looking for foreign assassins. They dived at me out of the smoke. As they were leading me off, two more figures emerged, a tall one and a short one.

"Damn it, it's Percy Brown, the telegraph boy," said Joey Lake to Bill Williams. Years before they had sent me on my journeys from the Shrewsbury telegraph office counter. They

were now in Paris from the battlefields working the Conference communications. We had a reunion that evening and all was forgiven.

So I went on my way photographing groups of Italians, French, potentates from the Near, Middle and Far East. The proceedings then were not good Press material. What action stuff could be got out of a peace conference, anyway? Sir George Riddell was the liaison officer, and in rich cockney invited us to the Prime Minister's tea-parties. These were funny functions. Sir George was my best friend in Paris, for he put me on to a few minor stories which made news. He had a sense of humour, in spite of the serious books he wrote. There was plenty to laugh at, and I should think that the Vienna Congress was a side show compared with this design of a melting-pot for all human frailties, and from which was to come the lasting peace of the world.

The Prime Minister's peace tea-parties produced all sorts of little squabbles. Here sometimes Sir George would act like a schoolmaster chiding his children on the way they wrote their stories. The very special correspondents were expected to write bright articles from the dreary material handed out to them. There were long discussions on whether the copy should be typed or hand-written. This caused petulant remarks from some ripe old journalists with famous names.

Here it was that Lloyd George trounced George Curnock, Lord Northcliffe's man, for publishing an irresponsible interview with Mr. Hughes, Australia's Prime Minister. George Curnock was withered by Lloyd George's scorn while taking the knock for his chief, who at that time hated the Prime Minister for not running the Conference his way. The gist of the attack was that: "One of your number, a responsible journalist, has gone to a man who is deaf and has taken from him mere discussion points and printed them as decisions. Gentlemen, do you know that article nearly wrecked the Peace Conference! Yes, even the peace of the world." And you know how Lloyd George can do his stuff.

George tried to put up a show, but subsided after a weak attempt to justify himself. He was loyally carrying out the orders of Lord Northcliffe, at that moment engaged in a guerrilla war against Lloyd George, who, after running England's most difficult war, still had his hands very full of problems: complications of race, language and territory. So Curnock got it in the neck. The incident did not finish at that. Curnock was well liked by

the lads. Knox of the *Morning Post* had a go in support of his colleague.

Knox slowly rose to his feet and, stretched to his full height, glared across at the Prime Minister.

"Mr. Prime Minister," said Knox very slowly, and using a devastating pause to attract attention, "Mr. Prime Minister, am I to assume that you also associate your remarks with my article published this morning?"

Lloyd George continued to stir his tea until his secretary nudged his elbow. He peered across at his questioner. There was deadly silence while the world's Press waited in suspense. Dear old Knox was now looming above the tea-party like a swaying captive balloon, and repeated his challenge in the voice of a drill sergeant.

"What did you say your newspaper was?" asked the P.M., pretending not to know.

"The *Morning Post*," said Knox proudly.

"The *Morning Post*, *Morning Post*. Oh dear no. I never read it," said the P.M., turning away to resume the stirring of his tea and the conversation with his secretary.

Knox subsided into his seat like a deflated balloon, to disappear under the ripple of laughter of his colleagues. No one ever challenged the P.M. again at the tea-parties. This is only a sample of the trifles seen in the by-ways of the Conference.

I had a grand time exploring Paris, for no one seemed to know anything about the Peace Conference, which was then fulfilling its promise of developing into a massed wrangle. At a Press banquet I met Smiley, an ex-prisoner-of-war colleague sent by the *Irish Times* to report the Conference in bulk—columns of it. He is now its editor, and three times his prison-camp weight. He sent thousands of words daily. I know, for I helped him to count them. So much space had to be filled, and Smiley filled it.

I tried to find out more about the progress of the Conference, but he was as much in the dark as I was. Procedure and ceremony mattered more than the grand purpose already forgotten. The side-shows were entertaining. The delegates and their satellites jockeying for precedence dined off the best, while poor Scotland Yard nearly starved in the basement. The world's famous detectives were on the point of striking for better conditions and pay when these were improved and the storm was averted.

It was their job to examine the credentials of everyone who entered the headquarters of the Conference. Some of the bluest blood, beautiful girls appearing like Ziegfeld Follies in day-time costumes, said they were secretaries and typists. The Yard men asked some of them to prove it. They flounced through the barriers, heads high in the air, to join the gay crowd who were going to produce the peace of the world.

I attended all the opening sessions, and watched Balfour sleep like a babe through one of Wilson's speeches. More interesting were some of the colossal preparations behind the scenes. The most expensive equipment for blue-printing, map-making and letter-press printing was there, and provided me with a useful series of pictures. I met battalions of experts and technicians.

Producing the Peace Conference was like producing a film, colossal edifices of plaster which went into dissolution when the show was over—for that was all it was. As I write the crash is on us. A few are still alive who made the peace, and still criticising their own handiwork, knowing that the public has a short memory.

A queer offer caused my return to London. A tall, stream-lined detective told me that Mr. Basil Thompson, in charge of the police arrangements, wanted to see me urgently. He wanted me to return to Germany on a special mission but would not say what it was. "Captain Spencer", head of the Military Intelligence, would explain when I got to London.

I did not jump at the offer, as I had a good job, if I could hold it. Apparently this was why the authorities wanted me to work under the screen of the Press, just as the enemy did during the Great War. Why must we imitate the enemy, I wondered? I thought of the snoopers, coppers' narks, and political spies. I had good reason to remember these, the lowest form of the human species, except for perhaps the "enquiry" agents who lurk about corridors of hotels to get divorce evidence. I thought that after four years of war the dirty work would come to an end and we could all go back to a decent code.

It was Detective-Sergeant Probert who thought he was doing me a good turn by telling Basil Thompson that I was intelligent and competent enough to carry out a mysterious mission to Germany. We were boys together in the old Shrewsbury Minstrels.

He wished me luck when I left for London to find out what it



was all about. Although I did not fancy the ordinary routine work, I was prepared to take on a special job where I might do some good.

On the way over I was struck by the irony of the offer. I had spent three years in German prisons and stables because the Germans said I had been sent by "Captain Spencer", head of the British Secret Service, and now I was to meet him! I began to wonder if I had met him in Paris in 1914 and did not know it! Perhaps the Germans knew more than I did.

When I reached London I asked Mr. Will for advice, for I thought he might know something about the project. He listened carefully. He told me to follow my conscience after I had seen the officials in Whitehall. I went to the address given me by Basil Thompson and found that "Captain Spencer" was expecting me. Funny place for the headquarters of the Secret Service, I thought as I was taken up in a tiny lift over a famous club and then shown up a narrow stairway to what seemed like the attics. A bright young officer was waiting for me, and told me a few details. He told me what to do with the information and how to get it to England, but he could not tell me exactly what I had to do! I asked him if it was about armaments, for if it was there was no need to join the Secret Service, for it was already obvious that the Germans were not going to disarm unless they were compelled. I wrote articles on this subject after meeting General Morgan and others who were not allowed in many munition factories on the excuse that as gentlemen they could not probe industrial secrets. That is another story, and a bad one for those of our officials who considered it a good policy to preserve the Germans' strength as a counterbalance against the French, who then had the finest army in the world.

From the interview I could not see sufficient importance in the mission to induce me to take it under the screen of the Press. I asked the officer if he were really Captain Spencer, but he evaded the question. Looking back on the experience, I don't believe there ever was a Captain Spencer. More likely our authorities built up the myth to fool the enemy, and did it very successfully. But the Germans nearly put me against the wall for knowing him!

Seeing that I was not keen on the vague mission, the officer told me to consider it for a few days. I saw Mr. Will, and his advice settled it. I gave my decision to Whitehall and returned to my job. A generous cheque was sent to cover my expenses,

and that was all I had to do with Secret Service. When I got outside the wonderful-looking building I breathed with relief, as my mind imagined hundreds of busy little spies hatching out traps for the future enemy. I have often wondered if I took the wrong turning.

So ended the first phase of my job. Mr. Will asked me if I would like to return to Paris. When I described the Peace Conference preliminaries to him, its long speeches, its tedious meetings of delegates who had already forgotten what they had been sent for, its swank and snobbery, its complete lack of goodwill and co-operation, he realised it was a story of words without action. The main subjects for camera-men were delegates coming and going, eating and drinking, dancing and talking and a frightening waste of the nation's money, with little promise of any enduring benefit for us or anyone else.

I suggested that I plunge into the Press game and learn it properly. The rough and tumble of the routine work would prepare me for travelling assignments. I wanted to learn all about flashlight and night photography, to be able to take photographs under any conditions. I would get a typewriter and try to learn the knack of writing my stories in crisp, snappy style.

Bill Curnock, the news-editor, gave me plenty of practice, sometimes six jobs a day. I have covered a morning wedding at St. Margaret's, Westminster, the champagne reception afterwards at Claridge's, a millionaire's lunch at the Savoy, another wedding at the Chapel Royal next to the Savoy, a First League football match at Chelsea, a lock-out, dreadful scenes on the Embankment of London's night life, then, as a contrast to these, I went back to the Savoy to snap beautifully dressed women attending the banquets and cabarets, to get a close-up view of post-war gaiety enjoyed by the new war-rich. No wonder my colleagues called me the "onion". Those were very full days, but I never tired, for I was invited to the parties. The rich were good to the Press now the ration card was abolished, and treated us to wonderful food and wine.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ON THE WAY

I STAYED ON THE "RANK" for some weeks, taking on anything. There were several publicity trips, a parliamentary visit to the Fleet, where at the lunch-table you would find the names of Lord and Lady somebody who had given their invitations to their butler and his wife, rollicking times paid for by the good old British Public.

Then I became due for a short holiday. You could not guess where this led me, this quiet interlude. Having no pretensions to any education (it would be no use, anyway, for it sticks out a mile, says my best pal), I thought I would go somewhere quiet and do a bit of intensive reading. I could handle German and French, the sort you learn mumbling to yourself in prison and occasional chats with French and Russian soldiers. But it was the stuff which gives the special correspondent his superiority complex that I wanted to have a look at. I have listened to *The Times*, *Telegraph* and the *Morning Post* men talk subjects which were a closed book to me. A stray remark made my course for me.

Bill Curnock was talking about Bolsheviki and their wickedness. Having met plenty in German prisons, I asked him what the British variety were like and where they were to be found. He said I would find droves at Ruskin College Summer School, Oxford.

"Ring up the bloody Fabian Society," he said sullenly, being a staunch Conservative.

So I went to the Summer School, and took my mother with me. I lived in the College itself, and got an hotel room for my mother. Here was another new world to me, all classes and opinions to listen to, a glimpse of University life. The headmasters of the other colleges lectured to us and took part in the debates, which were not up to the Oxford Union style, for the chairman could not always have his say until the argument in the corner had finished. It was grand, wholesome stuff, with no high-hats to put you off your story.

At the first meal and lecture I saw plenty of material for pictures

and stories for articles I had suggested to Doctor Bulloch of the *London Graphic*. He said he would print it under the title of "Melting-Pot for Prejudice". There was a variety of personalities, ranging from the stone-blind principal and his charming wife who took care of our comfort and catering, to the Bolshy-minded miners. There were London schoolmasters, Civil servants, and business men come to learn political economy.

I read a little between talks and took my mother about the city of colleges. Ruskin College Summer School was the best example of intelligent exchange of opinions I have ever met. There was every shade of politics, and arguments were heated. Here was on tap a constant flow of easily digested knowledge. The Fabians had a knack of pulling your leg without your noticing it. We were taken round the other colleges, and treated as if we were brothers and not casuals. The "reds" were professors from the London School of Economics. Graham was a fine type, and very patient with us.

I wrote down my notes and used my camera with the permission of the Principal and his wife. One picture showed men of all types discussing the problems of the day against a lovely background of scenery in the college grounds. Study groups wandered by the river and made fine pictures. To go with these I wrote a good meaty article.

Then a curious thing happened. Seeing a paragraph in the *Daily Sketch*, I decided to do some free-lance work to pay for the fees and hotel expenses. I found a dreadful story true in every detail. The widow and children of the lock-keeper living in the cottage at the lock-gates of the canal at the edge of the city had been turned out of their home. The farmer owner of the adjoining field had allowed the poor woman to shelter in the open cowshed. There I found them living among their furniture. The younger children were put to bed on straw in an old wagon. Two soldier sons were being demobbed. When I reached the cowshed home one of them had already arrived in full uniform straight from France. Imagine his feelings when he found his mother, brothers and sisters in the shed. What a home-coming for a hero!

This seemed a real story to me, so I sent it off to George Knight of the Central News. I knew my own firm would not touch it. Although the story was circulated to every newspaper, only the *Daily Sketch* published the pictures! The extraordinary thing

about the story was that the family had to stay there for weeks before they could find a water-tight roof. Things were very uneven at this time, and it shows to what a callous state of mind we had descended.

It became known at Ruskin College that I had taken the pictures of the homeless family housed in the cow-shed. From that time on I was an outcast. Heaven only knows why. I could not understand the complete change of atmosphere. When I approached some students they turned away and closed up like oysters. I suspected an artful, ferret-eyed creature from the London School of Economics. Even a world-famous professor who visited the college to give some lectures took on the same attitude. Only the London schoolmaster remained on speaking terms with me. I asked him why, in this home of free speech and discussion, these people had given me the bird.

"You photographed the miners giving a blackboard demonstration of the Soviet System. What would Scotland Yard say if they saw the pictures?" he answered gravely.

So that was the trouble, and not the pictures of the cow-shed. Even the people who preached freedom and open discussion were indulging in intrigue. I thought anything could be discussed in England, and as there was certainly a lot of funny talk at the College, why not give it fresh air? Why make a secret society of a group discussion? That starts suspicion. That is what Hyde Park is for, to get it off your chest.

Graham did not agree with me. Anyway, my pictures and the article for the *London Graphic* would put matters right. I sent off my plates and some notes that made a good story. Then I waited for the arrival of the *London Graphic*. What a shock I had! At the bottom of the back page all that was published was a tiny paragraph, "Melting-Pot for Prejudice". And I was promised a full page by the editor! After all my trouble! Was I mad? I could have burnt the place down when I remembered the sly looks when I took my plates to the station. I phoned Doctor Bulloch, who said that my plates had been fogged before being put on the train. Also my copy had been tampered with, and only one page was left. I could get no satisfaction from anyone, but I felt sure that the undersized, rat-faced teacher had fogged the plates. Thus ended my short Oxford career.

Some time after the Summer School had finished I heard the truth. That little creature had told the blind Principal that I

was a Scotland Yard detective come down to the College to investigate the doings of the students! Instead of challenging me, they had stolen my stuff and ruined it. Here was I, who knew more about the supposed Bolsheviks than these tuppenny-halfpenny professors, the stuff of which bureaucrats are made, who had lived safe and sheltered lives during the Great War, under suspicion because I talked facts and experiences, and not mere academic theories. Here indeed was a whiff of the new tyranny.

I paid my bill and went north with my mother to Goole; not an ideal holiday resort, but my mother wanted to see a cousin, who was the dock-master. We breathed good air while we watched the shipping. I met an old skipper, friend of Captain Fryatt, who had lived in my stable in Ruhleben for some days before the Germans shot him. After a drink he said he was sailing to Holland next day. Had I seen a story in the papers telling of the Kaiser's intention of changing his residence from Amerongen to Doorn? This sounded a good story. Captain Cook offered me a passage in his ship.

My mother was agreeable to return home alone when her time was up, so I arranged with the skipper to go on board. We had a good voyage, talking over old times with the crew, some of whom had been in our prison camp. They had been torpedoed and sent to the same prison, Stadvogtei, before being transferred to Ruhleben.

In Rotterdam I found a lot of useful Press subjects, which I sent to London, taking care not to give an address, for fear of being recalled, as my holiday had now expired. I went on to Amerongen.

As I entered the hotel a slight man with a cheery face welcomed me as a brother. His name was George Renwick of the Associated Press of America. He was glad to meet me, and would I have dinner with him? He produced a fine meal with three bottles of wine. I wondered what was behind this generous reception. He soon put my mind at rest—just the American way of receiving a Press colleague. After dinner George led me outside. He could give me some stuff to work on right away, he said, for soon the Kaiser was going to change homes.

Next day I took the first pictures of the Kaiser's furniture being moved to Doorn. With these I sent off an article describing the Kaiser's life, for he was still the world's hottest news. I never

expected George to go to the length of putting me on to a scoop he had been nursing for weeks.

In the morning he took me for a stroll to the Kaiser's temporary palace. We did not see much. Then he wanted to play billiards and drink Hulskamp, a comforting gin. We drank a lot of it, and I wondered why a liquor so strong did not bemuse us. George seemed all the more alert for it.

"Say, Poice, do you know anybody in the room without staring at them?" he said.

I changed ends and looked over the company. I knew no one.

"Don't you recognise one of your own ex-Members of Parliament?" he added. "Take a look at that guy with the Kaiser moustache."

I still did not recognise anyone. We went outside. George had something big he would not divulge until we got to his typewriter. Then he began to smash into that machine. He made every letter a hammer-blow. He ripped out the first page and told me to take a look at it.

"The Kaiser's Arch Spy, Trebitsch Lincoln, visits his Master in Amerongen."

I was for dashing off to take some pictures. George told me not to get het up, as he would see I got some stuff. When he had finished his story he typed another one for me, and just as good as the first!

"Now listen, Poice. You cable this story to your paper; they will like it," he said simply.

There was no catch in it. He not only shared his scoop with me, but wrote it for me! We went back to the café, where the spy was still with his colleague. George asked me to make him talk. Trebitsch Lincoln was pretending he could not speak English.

When we had the table again I invited the spy to join the game. He did not even answer. I turned to George and said that this stranger looked like the German spy who tried to trap the British Fleet in 1914 when he was M.P. for Darlington. A look of anger came over his face. So we ladled it on, trying to bait the ex-Member for Darlington to talk. At last George said he was going to send his message, and read the title aloud. The spy blanched. We went to the post office and saw the official in charge. George was so decent he put my message first over the counter. While we were talking, in rushed Trebitsch Lincoln.

"What are you going to say? You will ruin me. Let me see it," he shouted.

"Well, Mr. Lincoln, you can't be up to any bloody good here, and the very fact you *are* here is the best news-story today," said George calmly.

"Gentlemen, I am a spy no longer. I have come only to see about the Kaiser's book he is writing. Let me see what you are saying about me," said Lincoln.

"Yes, we will do that, won't we, Poice? On one condition: that you come to the Kaiser's gateway and be photographed presenting your credentials to the German guard," said George.

"But the world will know that I am visiting the Kaiser?" said the now distressed spy.

"The world is going to know that in any case, and the story will lose nothing in the telling," continued George relentlessly.

Lincoln, now completely deflated, agreed and dropped to a cringing condition when he read the cable. We held up the stories, and the spy came with us to fetch the camera. I made the most of the occasion. He looked what he was, the lowest skunk who ever crawled into the House of Commons. Then we discussed the cables. The spy re-drafted our stuff and made a reformed spy hero of himself. Then he offered us the Kaiser's secret diary for *fifty thousand pounds*! How he imagined he could get such an amount of money from us I don't know. I toyed with the idea, for we would have liked to see the manuscript. If he had had it, we would have seen it, for he was all ours.

George told me to keep the spy busy while he sent off our cables in the original form. You don't use decent ways when dealing with such scum. The editor sent me congratulations and told me to carry on. When the spy read the *Daily Graphic* he sent a letter threatening me with death. I still have that letter. Whatever dirty work he was up to never came off after the Kaiser's officials realised that the world knew the spy was still the tool of the Hohenzollerns.

I got plenty of useful stuff, but the spy incident had killed my chances of getting the Kaiser himself. Extra guards were posted in case I tried to steal into the grounds. The best picture I got of the Kaiser was just a "cross on the plate", as the dark-room staff say it. George was still planning for me.

"Say, Poice," he said one morning at breakfast, "I'd like your company for ever, but I think you have cleaned up every-



thing at the moment. Why don't you follow that spy to Berlin, for I know he is up to some dirty work?"

He had heard that Lincoln was leaving for Germany, and we would have followed him but for the fact that George's exclusive job was to remain on the Kaiser's doorstep in case he made a statement to the world's Press. As there were many stories I could cover in Germany, I packed up and left, after giving George Renwick the best party I could muster in that lovely little Dutch village.

A day in Berlin showed me that Germany was a treasure-house of news stories. Ludendorff was already back from his hide-out. The next morning I snapped Trebitsch Lincoln on Ludendorff's doorstep! He came down at me like a wild cat. I dropped my camera in the taxi and prepared for the worst, which was only a torrent of words. I had to dive towards him while telling him that I would throttle him. He went into reverse when a few Berliners gathered. I made him believe that I knew all his rotten plans to plot with Ludendorff a surprise on the Allies.

The curious thing was that this was true, and the plot fizzled out later in the Kapp Putsch. I had had enough of the spy, so I went up the steps to call on Ludendorff before Lincoln dropped the poison by phone. It was some days later that I was given my first interview with the General. Do you remember when he threatened to decimate British prisoners because the British Government jailed his submarine officers who had shot some English sailors escaping from their torpedoed ship?

I can imagine the feelings of men who commit murders of revenge. The temptation passed, so I shot Ludendorff with my camera and drew from him his story. It went over big with my editors. I interviewed a few more Germans and dragged their "It was all a mistake" stuff from them and dropped them when I heard that the Inter-Allied Missions were already established in Berlin. There was plenty of useful stuff here, pages of pictures of members of our missions at work and our Tommies making garages of the Kaiser's stables. There was so much material that my firm started to sell it to other newspapers. Doing very well out of it, they did not mind my over-staying my "holiday".

Later on I heard that a British Ambassador had reopened our Embassy. Here is my first contact with the British Foreign Office. I handed in my card to the doorman. He told me to wait, on the step, as he closed the door none too quietly. I waited ten

minutes. The door opened again and a tall, handsome and haughty figure appeared. What did I want? said the figure, his eyes fixed on something in the distance, just as those automatic, life-like effigies at Blackpool South Shore fair talk at you. I explained what I wanted and where I was from, trying to assume the authoritative air of respectability carried by my colleagues. The eyes of the figure went down to my camera. He closed the door without even asking me to wait. But I did, for quite a long time. At last the door was reopened.

"The Ambassador would like to know what you have been doing since you arrived here," said the figure.

I went over my list of subjects and occasions. Figure retired again. After some moments it reappeared, slightly animated. Here is the speech.

"The Ambassador thinks that as you have spent so much of your time photographing Germans, you can continue to photograph Germans," and the door closed slowly and automatically clicked just as the figure finished speaking.

I had to sit on the steps and laugh at the superb show of snobbery. For a moment I felt like a man who lifts a jug and finds he has got only the handle; the rest is on the floor. Or perhaps I looked more like a poverty-stricken patient who calls on a Harley Street specialist.

With a few rare exceptions our representatives were all of a kind. When I had nothing better to do I called on them to see how they reacted. I often wondered what contacts they made of use to the nation which sent them. No wonder foreigners think we are a queer lot.

After a last look round Berlin I exposed all my plates, bought a good camera, enjoyed a farewell party with members of our mission, and departed for home.

The *Daily* and *London Graphics* were wonderful papers to learn on. They had not the huge circulations of the rest, but were a better-finished result in all departments. Besides the regular job of getting pictures, never irksome, I did other things. There were star men in each department. When parliamentary correspondent Turnbull interviewed me after my German trip, he made it look very easy. In fact he showed me how to do it.

A few days later I was sent to photograph Pavlova and her swans in Hampstead. The photos did not take long, so I wrote a column interview, realising that pictures and letter-press together

make the ideal feature. I was sent to photograph and criticise night-dance restaurants, but I enjoyed these, for London ballroom dancing was then at its most graceful. Miss Harding and Victor Sylvester had created such a high standard at the Empress Rooms that no one dare go on first-class floors unless they danced well. There was no room for the dancing riff-raff. Being a good skater, I soon mastered the new style of dancing, and with this and some tennis I got back to pre-war fitness.

Paul Whiteman came over and raised the musical standard of the ballroom. The Grafton Galleries became the rendezvous for royalty and aristocracy. We had several roof gardens, also the Midnight Follies, where there was no foolishness, but first-class entertainment, dancing and careful eating and drinking. I was not encouraged when I praised instead of criticising. I said that it was the scores of nasty little clubs, full of vice and dopers, which should be downed. At this time there was no need to go to Paris to see illicit bawdy shows.

Although I did several jobs on the paper, even the leader sometimes, there was one job I admired but never attempted. The real builders of the paper were the subs. The masses of material they had to deal with were an embarrassment. I would be worrying about getting my stuff into shape when Evelyn Foot, the chief sub-editor, would snatch it, telling me to leave it to him. In the morning would appear a beautifully finished piece of writing. Those subs were like the photographic printers, who have saved many a Press-photographer his job by getting out of a fuzzy negative something you could not see with the naked eye. These two sections rarely get praise, but if anything goes wrong they get the kicks.

I realised I was lucky in this happy ship, controlled without discipline. Between jobs I could wander into any department, picking up knowledge. Easy money came from gossip paragraphs written during the day's assignments.

## CHAPTER THREE

### FATE FLINGS ME OFF THE HUB

ONE MORNING IN THE OFFICE I was the last to join the photographers' queue for jobs. There were garden-parties, bazaars, murders, race-meetings, city frauds, communist riots and Buckingham Palace investitures. The art editor handed me a cutting and told me to go to the North Pole. Just like that. I read the cutting in the library.

"Arctic S.O.S. 80 Russians perishing in the drift ice of the Arctic. British ice-breaker *Sviatagor* to the rescue. Desperate gamble to save *Solovei Budermurivitch*, which is without food, coal and wireless."

When I left the *Daily Graphic* office to go on a job I was rarely handicapped by permits and instructions. I just vanished, with only the chief knowing my destination. In this way the result was always exclusive—a camera-man's dream.

Such a job was the rescue of the *Solovei Budermurivitch*, one of our large transports carrying stores to our troops during the last of those ill-fated invasions of Russia by Generals Ironside, Kolchak and Denikin.

We were still technically at war with Russia when the S.O.S. messages were sent from the ice-bound ship in the Sea of Kara. Our Admiralty owned the only ice-breaker powerful enough to smash a course through the masses of ice. An arrangement was made with the Norwegian Government to lend *Sviatagor*. A British crew would deliver the great ice-breaker to Bergen, where the Norwegians would take it over. All pressmen were barred.

The last news said the *Solovei Budermurivitch* had been swept through the Straits of Kara into the Kara Sea and was now in danger of being crushed to pieces. Her radio was faint. Unless something was done quickly she would perish.

Thousands of miles of land and sea travel in fresh countries, new peoples. What a chance! I looked at the map. What a tiny place was England! I tried to visualise the wonderful things to be seen on the top of the world. The sea to me is merely a means of getting somewhere. As I gaze out from the good

solid earth to the smooth ocean I know that as soon as I sail on it something will start it running houses high. Yet, with or without permission, I cannot resist getting into any ship about to sail. A score of times have I fallen for this weakness, and been landed in some curious places. *Sviatagor* was about to sail. Where from? How to get aboard?

Still fearing that Calvert was joking, I hurried to the Admiralty. Hundreds of pressmen were at the publicity office worrying Lieutenant Henneker-Heaton for permits to go with the expedition. I listened. "No, no, no," was all I could hear. With every refusal the finality in his voice became more definite. No British subjects and no journalists of any nationality could join the expedition. When my turn came I was refused like the rest. Mine was a very impatient No.

I wandered over to Lyons and sat down with a coffee to think things over. There was nothing helpful in the newspapers. Then I phoned Calvert. Everything was arranged, I said. What is arranged? asked Calvert impatiently. He had just been through to the Admiralty, and was told only what we already knew. I was to go on to another job, an inquest in Fulham. But I had arranged to go with the expedition, I said. Calvert said I was to waste no more time, as there was a full London diary. I repeated that I was going with the expedition.

I had no ties in London, and my mother was fixed up, for I had arranged for a regular allowance to drop into her letter-box every Friday.

I returned to the Admiralty to find a very tired publicity officer refusing the last triers. He was on the point of turning on me when I stopped him. I wanted nothing, I said—just a tiny service within his power. He paused and glared. Could he make a signal to the commander of the ice-breaker at Rosyth merely asking for a passage to Bergen, South Norway, where the Norwegians were to take over?

"It's suicide; the *Sviatagor* will never reach Nova Zembla," he said.

I pleaded and wheedled. How would he like to stay in London covering the hum-drum round while there was a wonderful trip going begging? Just to Bergen, I said. He had his orders, and he could not favour one newspaper more than another, said Henneker-Heaton. But had any of the others asked merely for a passage as far as Bergen? I inquired. No; there was that

about it. He was weakening. Did I badly want to go? I never wanted anything more. His good nature got the better of his official self. He agreed to make a signal to *Sviatagor* just for the North Sea crossing. The Admiralty had authority over the ship only to Norway. I blessed him and taxied to the office to collect cameras and a load of plates.

I took the train for Scotland. I was too excited to sleep, for there was still danger of being recalled if some one crabbed the venture. I arrived at the Firth of Forth in the morning and saw *Sviatagor* standing out in the water as majestic as a battleship. Behind me, its iron grandeur silhouetted against the morning sky, was the Forth Bridge.

The train being late caused Commander Claude L. Bate to roar at me from the bridge. As I scrambled up the barrel-shaped side of the ice-breaker I must have looked like a human Christmas tree, with rucksack, haversack, cameras and oddments dangling from me. Anyway, I was aboard and beyond recall. The Commander was frigid until he took me down to the ward-room and poured out some drinks. I confessed my plans. He then became friendly, but disappointed because he and his crew were to hand over the best part of the trip at Bergen to the Norwegians. His destroyer was to take them back to England.

He gave me a pair of skis, a heavy sheepskin coat, fur hat and became as enthusiastic about my venture as if he were going too.

We took three days to reach Bergen, during which he showed me scores of places to hide in if the Norwegians refused to take me. They had already radioed him that no pressmen would be allowed aboard. So I prepared for the worst.

*Sviatagor* was as big and powerful as a battleship. She had a seventy-foot beam and drew thirty-five feet of water. No ship afloat had bigger measurements in these parts. She ploughed her way slowly but majestically across the North Sea. The nearer we got to land the more determined I was to sail in her. I soon found that the Norwegians were just as determined that I should not.

At Bergen I tried to stick to my cabin, but the new chief mate turned me out. He and his third saw me off the ship with my bits and pieces, but not all, for I had hidden one camera.

Mr. Dick, the British Consul, listened to my tale and telephoned Captain Sverdrup, commander of the expedition. He said that I could see him in Christiania. I made the two days'

journey over the snows to the capital. When I got to Sverdrup's house he would not see me! An urgent note brought no reply. I went to his office, and still he would not see me. Curious, I thought, after he had suggested my taking that blinding journey over the snows. So terrific was the fierce light over those mountains that you could not face it without spectacles. At Bergen railway station I had refused to buy a pair of coloured spectacles for a shilling. In the mountains I was glad to buy a pair for a pound.

On the journey I made a friend of the King's messenger. In Christiania he introduced me to the British Minister, one of those rare exceptions among our officials abroad. He gave me a wonderful dinner at the Legation and also a letter to Doctor Nansen, who had led several of his expeditions. Still Sverdrup would not see me.

There were rumours of insurance difficulties and a mystery hung about the expedition which made me all the more keen to go with it. I still persevered, but the leader would have no truck with me. When I returned to Bergen no one would allow me aboard the ice-breaker. The hundreds of officers and men were sworn to secrecy. Although I did not know it, the leader was making a Press contract to sell the exclusive story of the rescue at five hundred pounds a column! No wonder he did not want any pressman aboard the ship. If he had been frank with me he would have saved himself much money and trouble.

In the meantime I took several series of pictures and wrote some snappy little articles on life in Norway in order to keep the office sweet. My friend Commander Bate returned to England in his destroyer after he had handed over to Captain Falkmuss, second in command of the expedition.

There was no doubt now: the leaders would not allow me on board at any price. They warned the officers and crew not to help me. I was near to confessing I had a camera aboard. So I pretended that I did not want to go anyway—except of course to Sverdrup, who had now arrived in Bergen to take over. The Norwegian Press made a story of my being refused and praised the leaders for their firmness. I covered all sides of the preparations for the death-or-glory voyage.

Then I pretended to drop the idea of going with them by going to Stockholm to photograph the funeral of the Crown Princess of Sweden. Knowing that the *Sviatagor* had to call at

ports on the way up to North Cape, I threw everyone off the scent by pretending to go home. I would watch my chance and stow away during the night, forgetting that there was no night in the Arctic at this time of the year! I was really getting desperate. The few friends I had cut no ice with Sverdrup, not even the great Doctor Nansen.

Meanwhile I had covered the royal funeral. You can certainly enjoy yourself in Stockholm if you have plenty of money. I stayed in the world's finest hotel, the Grand, right on the water, facing the palace. The hundred pounds of my own soon started to shrink, as I thoroughly entered into the gay life of that outwardly serious city. The Swedes are great eaters and their food was wonderful.

Two Norwegian journalists were so interested in my plans that I told them I was going home, and even went to the station. Instead I took a train for the north, and after a most extraordinary railway journey I arrived in Boden and cut across to Narvik.

What scenery! Mountains with their steep bases set in jet-black fjords. Clear blue skies overhead. The electric railway was an unexpected pleasure, and went right up into the Arctic Circle. The food at the stations was another surprise, deliciously cooked, abundant, and help-yourself service. You pay what you owe as you leave. The train stops so that all may eat and drink, and everyone gets down to it, train officials and all. Apart from the lavish buffet of sandwiches and salads there were dishes of ready-cooked steaks and poultry.

*Sviatagor* sailed on to Trondhjem. I was ahead of the ice-breaker, and meanwhile the mystery deepened. Weeks were passing, and I often wondered if it would reach *Solovei* before crew and passengers perished. The ice-field was already beginning to bulge the plates.

So I went another stage on my journey, to Tromsø. Here I waited until *Sviatagor* sailed into the deep, silent fjord. The British Consul and I were the only people on the dock-side. Hundreds of officers and crew were assembled on the rails. How they glared when I waved to them!

When they came ashore they asked me what I was doing there? Just to take a few pictures before they tackled the serious part of the expedition. Why should I want to go with them? Not my line. I was allowed to go on board, and saw Sverdrup



privately. No, he could not take me, for several reasons. Yet he would tell me nothing. Did I not realise that England was still at war with the Russians? They would shoot me, he said. I was willing to chance it. And I humbled myself to the stocky little man.

He made a concession: although he could not take me in *Sviatagor*, I could board *Harde*, the collier carrying coal for the return voyage, at Vardo, the last European port of call. As *Harde* must be with *Sviatagor*, that was good enough for me. That was his promise. I wondered if he meant what he said, or if he intended to side-track me in the Arctic. I had his word now, and he looked integrity personified. Surely he would not lure me hundreds of miles round North Cape for nothing!

In the fast mail-boat I sailed on round North Cape to Vardo, where *Sviatagor* would ship the last stores. The expedition was becoming more mysterious. I waited weeks wondering what was happening to the *Solovei*. At Vardo I made two good friends. One was a zoologist named Henderson from Lowestoft. Russia's back door seemed a long way to go for eggs. He lent me a climber's rope and showed me how to coil it neatly round my waist. In fact, he prepared me for stowing away in case of necessity. The British Consul, a Norwegian, was a friend, and always on the look-out for *Sviatagor*.

Early one morning he rushed to the hotel to say that the expedition had been signalled half a day away. He advised me to take a Turkish bath to ginger me up. To make the steam an old lady threw water on hot stones. It was a primitive method, but efficient. She did not notice our nudity and massaged us vigorously. I certainly felt fit for anything now, so got my kit together ready to go aboard. I addressed several parcels to Professor Breitfuss, the Arctic fishery expert watching the expedition for the Bolsheviks. I had made a friend of him in Bergen and Tromsø. And how I was to need him later!

Realising the faint prospects of joining the expedition, I had hinted to Calvert that something might still be done in London. He phoned the Admiralty and cabled me: "Sverdrup still determined to have no pressmen aboard, but I am backing you."

His message gingered me out of the dumps. All sorts of things were happening at this back door into Red Russia, but I had to keep my eye on the main chance. How slowly, the *Sviatagor*

sailed towards us! I was with Henderson when she was actually sighted. We looked for *Harde*, the collier, but she was not with the ice-breaker! A horrible suspicion seized me. When *Harde* was sighted ten miles away, going past us, I knew that Sverdrup had tricked me! How he had worked it out! After travelling those thousands of miles I felt a fool. My friends were just as disappointed, while I nearly wept with fury. I did not deserve such a scurvy trick.

Between the island port of Vardo and the mainland is a terrific race of water. The old Consul bundled me into a drifter carrying mail to *Sviatagor*, which we reached just as she was dropping anchor. You should have heard the roars of laughter from the officers and crew when they caught sight of me being pitched about in the drifter. On me I had one of everything, including Henderson's rope. There was no chance of getting on board unseen. There was no darkness to cover me. I had only one friend on board, and he could not help me.

When we pulled alongside I shouted through the wind and laughed with them. They taunted me with the news that the *Harde* had gone on ahead and that I could settle down on Vardo Island. I asked the chief mate to tell Sverdrup that I had come for the last pictures before I left for home. The *Sviatagor* would never be heard of again, so I must get last pictures of officers and men. You should have seen his face. The mate let me climb aboard, while several packages, including my own addressed to Breitfuss, were hauled up.

"Don't you know that after the Great War this ice-breaker was used to break down submarine booms, great steel trestles laid in the Firth of Forth to protect our fleet against German submarines? And don't you know that plates were torn open? Look in your log book," I said, and got instant attention.

He warned me that if I attempted to stow away I would not live to tell the tale. He would fire every stoke-hole and fill the gigantic tanks, he said. Then I said something.

"Don't think I want to be a Viking? I'm all for a quiet life. Do you think you are going to get back to Norway in a sieve like this? The British Government lent it only because they didn't know what to do with it. No, don't think I'm a damn fool as well as a pressman. I had to pretend to be anxious to come with you all the way so that I could have a longer time over here seeing the country."

The chief mate glared at me, not knowing whether to believe me.

"Why didn't you tell us this before? Stay here while I see Captain Sverdrup," he snarled.

I replied that they had given me little chance to say anything. Sverdrup asked me if the ship had been docked since the breaking down of the booms.

"Not likely," I answered, knowing nothing more than what Commander Bate had told me. "All the docks were too full of warships waiting for repairs."

They listened to me at last. I loathe liars, but that morning I lied relentlessly. I succeeded in making the officers believe that I really did not want to go with them to the rescue—all except the chief mate. He took me aside again and said that he would kill me if I tried to fool him. I kept up the bluff.

All I wanted now, I said, were some pictures of the officers and crew at the last European port, for, dead or alive, they would be world heroes. They did not think much of this, but now they knew why I did not want to go with them. I was a pressman, not a sailor, I kept repeating. Luckily there was a mist, so I asked permission to stay about until it lifted. I must have pin-sharp pictures, and the last ones must be the best. I wandered about the deck with the officers, never making a suspicious move.

I left my camera on deck and played about with the unnecessary tripod. The time passed slowly. It was a sight to see the sun rising from its bed about six feet above the horizon, for it was never out of view. I waited for my moment, inwardly sick with suspense. I thought of my cameras and equipment nicely stowed away just as I would like to be. With the scores of eyes on me there seemed not a chance. I went to the rail and shouted to the captain of the drifter to be sure to come back for me. I kept up this front and jollied the officers along, and told them about the lovely places at which I was to call on the way back to England. Germany was next, where I hoped to taste the Rhine wine. I showed them letters and pretended to be impatient to get off the ice-breaker. If only the mist would lift I could take my pictures. Most of my hide-outs were now out of the question. There was just one chance of my doing a vanishing act.

The officers began to go below to breakfast—all except the chief mate. He never took his eyes off me. I felt like a mouse with a cat pretending not to see me.

"I know you bloody Britishers from the last war," he said. "When you got your teeth into anything you never let go."

I laughed and told him he was a flatterer. He continued his cat-and-mouse game with me, giving me a little rope, then suddenly coming down on me round a corner. He was certainly taking no chances, whatever the condition of the bottom of the ship. Then the time came for his own breakfast. Here was my chance, I thought.

"Come and have some breakfast, you must be hungry," he said, with a sly look in his eye.

I kept up the jolly and went below with the rest. They gave me a piece of salty fish, and I pretended to enjoy it. What cracks I passed! The officers made big breakfasts, especially the chief mate. The huge wardroom became nearly empty while I lingered over the fish, pretending to be worried about the small bones. The chief mate was called up on deck to check some stores, and I was left with a few junior officers and the stewards.

My last chance had arrived. I must make my plunge now the eyes of the mate were off me. It was nearing sailing time. The deck noises were diminishing. All the stores had been taken on board. Suddenly I put my hands on my stomach and asked the nearest steward which side the lavatories were. As if I did not know every inch of the ship by now! I dived down the passage, my camera on my shoulder. Just at the end round the corner, he had said. To the right were the senior officers' cabins. I was out of sight for a second, and they thought they knew where I was.

I gently opened Sverdrup's door. No luck: he was at home while I thought he was on the bridge. So was Falkmuss, second in command, in his cabin next door. I moved like a cat burglar. I opened the door of the next cabin, occupied by Professor Breitfuss. He was on deck, so I slid like an eel into the shallow wardrobe cupboard and pulled the door to. When the spring lock clicked I nearly cried with relief. I edged my body into the corner and sat on the radiator behind the hanging clothes. The wardrobe was just high enough to stand in.

Now to wait for the storm. Would I be found before *Sviatagor* sailed? Never shall I forget those three days of torture. I had not long to wait. The first search came with a rush and roar from the chief mate entering the lavatories just a few feet away. The search-party slammed open the doors viciously enough to bring them off their hinges. They stampeded about the ship,

and sometimes I could hear the noise they made. I glanced at my watch, but time stood still. So did the ice-breaker, for Sverdrup would not sail with me inside her. If I had locked myself in Sverdrup's cabin there was little chance of finding me before sailing time. My worst moment was when the search-party came smashing their way into the Professor's cabin. But for the noise, they might have heard my heart thumping.

They dared not say too much to Breitfuss, but I heard them ask him when was the last time he saw me. Thank heaven he had not yet opened my parcels I had addressed to him on board with notes inside. The party came towards the wardrobe and the Professor opened the door. My heart-beats became mallet blows. Had they moved the clothes to one side they would have seen me. But they did not, and passed along shouting, "Come out, Mr. Brown; we are going to shoot into all lockers and cupboards. Come out!" until they made a noisy chant of it. In my desperation to keep still, neither eating nor drinking worried me. I was already dripping with sweat from fright and heat. I got sufficient air by sucking it in between the door and frame. So the time passed, but *Sviatagor* did not sail. In the distance I could still hear search-parties shouting about the ship and trying to frighten me from my hide-out. Several shots were fired, but I hung on. How long would it last?

The time passed heavily as I listened to the waves smacking the plates. I glanced too often at my wrist-watch. Would they ever drag up that anchor? Two days passed, during which I nearly gave in. The torture of standing up and trying to get angles of rest was beating me. The narrow radiator hurt me. However, I stuck it, while my heavy coat kept me at fever heat.

At last with a crash they began to raise the anchor. I wept with relief. The calm became pandemonium. I could hear the chief mate shouting at the crew and a heavy bumping of iron. The ship moved! Although *Sviatagor* had a seventy-foot beam and eighteen-inch rolling keels, that ship still rolled to sixty-five degrees! Sverdrup told me this afterwards. I became so ill I dropped to the not-caring stage. Then I would drift away in semi-faints. I became almost too weak to get air.

Only once before have I dropped to the condition of not caring if I lived or died. This was in the old *Campania*, when I suffered the vilest form of sea-sickness while being bashed about in my bunk during a terrific Atlantic storm. I now became vaguely

aware that I was sinking for the last time. I would have collapsed to the floor had not the door and radiator held me together. My knees had lost all power of support. With a shock I wondered if this was death. Then I heard the chief mate and his relentless search-party, but much quieter now. They were getting hot again. They tore open more cupboards and passed on.

To get another lungful of air I pressed on the door, now a colossal effort in my weakness. My chest was too weary to inhale. I had some will-power, but no strength. How far had we got, I wondered? Back came the fear of being put out of the ship, and with it enough effort to suck in some more air. I listened to Professor Breitfuss coughing and clearing his throat. He was going to get a shock soon, but it could not be helped. I tried to cheer myself by thinking that I was not so badly off as the Chinese in their torture boxes. I stood up again, but in poor shape.

The sea-sickness subsided, for I was now too empty. Fighting for air pulled me together. Then another uncomfortable thing happened. The radiator became warm, and as time wore on it became unbearable. I knew I was fading out for the last time, and thumped on the door. Professor Breitfuss cried out while he opened it. When he saw who it was he gave a wail of anguish.

"Oh, Mr. Brown, why did you do this?" he moaned.

The wardrobe had held me together, but now I just collapsed on to the cabin floor. He saw my face, afraid I was going to die on him. I signalled for the water-bottle. How I drank! Breitfuss poured water over my face. I made him understand that if he would let me recover sufficiently I would get out of his cabin and no one would know where I had stowed away. As I recovered I got to my knees and saw the parcels I had addressed to Breitfuss, luckily still unopened.

He simmered down as I sat up and, silly though it was, I burst into silent laughter, at the foolish sight I must have seemed to him. As the ship rolled a little less, I recovered sufficiently to sit down and drink some more water. We arranged that I collect my parcels as soon as possible.

The lavatories were next to the officers' quarters. When the coast was clear I crept along to the first one. There I sat till midnight. I heard the officers come and go, some very sick, and then changed my lavatory. I passed hours like this until I became thirsty again. I would stick it out as long as possible, for the farther the ship sailed into the Arctic the less chance there

was of being sent back. I turned on a tap in the passage, but the water had been cut off. Past caring about niceties, I went back to a lavatory. I pulled the plunger and took a double handful of water from the pan. Sea-water! What a vile taste!

I heard heavy steps coming along the corridor outside, so hid behind the door, which was flung open against me. There stood Falkmuss. He shut the door, and there was I, huddled against the wall. He raved with rage. My legs would not carry me. Like wet wall-paper I collapsed to the floor again. He turned and shouted down the passage. I crawled along the floor up the stairway and across the landing into the open air. Never have I felt so weak—not even in prison. The air was ice cold, and I lay there and breathed it in. I looked over the gunwale. The fierce Arctic air hurt my eyes. I was not to be left for long. Who do you think brought me a jug of clean, fresh water? As I was subsiding again a voice with the slightest sign of feeling in it said:

“Come on in, you bloody fool; you’ll die of cold!”

It was the chief mate. I asked him to let me alone for a moment. Whether I was frog-marched I don’t know, but I found myself in the warm fug waiting for the next part of the programme. They had dumped me onto a bench in the gangway which was to be my home for weeks. It was like living on a pavement. I was certainly an outcast. Falkmuss threatened to put me in a boat. Later Oscar Clausen, a wealthy Norwegian, came up and, acting the perfect Englishman, asked me what I could do with. For a time he was friendly, but soon showed the same attitude as the senior officers. In fact he handcuffed me and took me down to the cells.

I must have been hysterical in my weakness, for I giggled foolishly when they found that two cooks who had got mad drunk on the ship’s store of vanilla occupied the only two cells. So I was hauled back to my public seat, and Clausen removed the handcuffs—to be Sverdrup’s problem for the rest of the voyage. Every officer and sailor at some part of the day came to look at me, as if I were some new monster fished from the deep. I offered to work for my passage. Sverdrup would not have this; so I was left in peace on the landing. Later I was allowed to go on deck for a breather, and was relieved to see no ships until we overtook a fleet of sealers. Still weak from the three days’ torture, I was a happy outcast. I tried to wear down the hostility, but no one dared fraternise. The chief mate threatened me

several times, but nothing came of it. He could not forgive me for besting him, for it was his special job to see I did not stay aboard. So on we rolled to the Straits of Kara.

The rest of the story is the struggle between Sverdrup and myself to get the news home first. After *Sviatagor* had smashed her way through the ice she was shadowed by the Bolshevik ice-breaker, *Canada*. Then it became a race. The Bolsheviks wanted to capture the White Russian officers. *Canada* had not the power to crash through the pack-ice, so had waited until *Sviatagor*, with her thousands of tons of weight, drove fiercely up on to the ice and broke it. She would slither back waddling to the water, then again would drive forward until a lane was made. So *Sviatagor* saved those White Russian passengers, who found sanctuary under the Norwegian flag hoisted in a British ship. The crew of the *Solovei* had already turned Red now they knew that the Anglo-Russian war was fizzling out.

After the excitement of the rescue all seemed to be forgiven, and I got my pictures and stories. Captain Mukaloff of *Canada* showed me over his ship. The state-room was now a class-room for cadets. The chief engineer was a Scotsman, and he proudly showed me his masses of machinery and engines, all made in Britain. *Canada* was an unsinkable ship, he said, and explained the system of bulkheads which could cut off any part of the ice-breaker into safe sections if penetrated by the ice.

A number of Esquimaux came alongside with presents of boiled auk's eggs, the only kind up there which do not taste of fish. In the party was a pretty little girl painted up for the occasion—also a present to me by her father. Mukaloff explained that sexual matters in these parts are not treated in the close, exclusive manner of the European. Perhaps it was just a gesture, for no one seem to be tempted by her sex appeal. The smell alone which came from her heavily oiled skins dispelled any temptation. I gave her some chocolate and handed her back to her father. I snapped some of them and their graceful craft and returned to *Sviatagor*.

There were so many subjects, I had to select carefully to make my plates pan out. A child had been born during the crisis, and of course it became everybody's baby. Whoever starved, this new passenger must live. The White Russian general showed me a wonderful boat he had made in case the Bolsheviks reached *Solovei* first. It could be used as a sleigh or a boat.



Now *Sviatagor* had taken in the rescued passengers I was put aboard the collier. Captain Jensen was friendly and gave me a bunk. While we were waiting for the expedition he took me on a twelve-miles trip with the Samoyedes to get salmon trout. We were away two days. They walked me until I was weary with carrying my camera and its three dozen dark slides. I said I would wait until they returned with the fish.

During a nine-hours wait on a pimple of rock protruding through the ice several things happened. A giant albatross dived for my eyes. Through the holes in the ice seals popped up their heads. I snapped one at fifteen yards. Jensen told me that no bird or beast would approach a man with a gun. I was near a colony of eider-duck hatching out their eggs, and this the albatross was guarding. That is Jensen's explanation of my experience.

As I waited on that pimple of rock, a terrible feeling of loneliness came over me. The silence was overwhelming. Although the sun still shone brilliantly, it was night, and very cold. After six hours I started shouting. I strained my eyes and ears, but there was not a sign of human life anywhere. The birds and beasts were in supreme control at that moment. Then a horrible feeling seized me. Suppose Jensen had mislaid me in those vast white spaces? I shouted until I lost my voice, but had sense enough to stay where I had been left. I had to move about to keep warm, or I should have frozen to death. I thought it curious that although the sun shone brilliantly night and day the birds still knew their bed-time, even if we forgot. Even the albatross guards retired. In the distance I could see a ridge on which were perched thousands of kittywake gulls.

The hours passed slowly, and I shall never forget that age-long wait in the ice and snow. I felt like weeping with relief when I caught sight of some tiny black figures a mile away. As they came up I saw that they were staggering beneath loads of duck and long, narrow fish which they called salmon trout.

The most beautiful sight of the whole trip came on our way back in the motor-boat. The crystal-clear water made the sea bottom look like some colossal aquarium. As we sped along the channel between the ice we approached some high cliffs. What looked like apple blossoms began to drift down slantwise to the sea. By the time we got level with the cliffs millions of divers dropped off them like a thick drifting shower of blossoms, to vanish under the waves. This went on the whole length of the

miles of cliffs. I wondered how the millions of birds could live, for there were neither trees, shrubs, nor even a blade of grass.

When we got back to the ship I asked Captain Mukaloff if he could send the rescue story over his radio. Sverdrup was quite civil now. I wondered if the leader would know if I sent my message from the *Canada*. Mukaloff said he would oblige me. I took it across to his Russian wireless operators.

The four ships were now anchored together, preparing for the journey home. Then began what I took to be my words crackling over the air. I had written instructions to collect costs from the London *Daily Graphic*. It was a shot in the dark, and I could only hope the story would reach some sympathetic station which would relay it to the office.

Suddenly my thoughts were shattered by the abrupt entrance of Sverdrup's batman. The leader wanted to see me at once. When I reached Sverdrup, he was seated with a bottle of port and two glasses on the table.

"Now I can tell you why I could not have you aboard my ship," he said, pouring out the port.

He had made a contract with the London *Times* to give exclusively first news of the rescue at five hundred pounds a column! I must hold my story, or he could not give me passage back to Norway! He must leave me at Nova Zembla. He had not invited me aboard, he said. A ship might not call there for years. I tried to bluff it out, but it was hopeless. I had my story stopped at once, and then asked Sverdrup when he intended sending his own copy. He replied that he had no time to write it yet, but would send it from Vardo. I could do the same after he had handed his in.

The chance of getting an exclusive story past Sverdrup seemed remote now, although a glimmering of an idea was in the back of my mind.

I will skip the voyage back to Europe, during which I revised my story. *Sviatagor* grounded twice, which made some more pictures as the divers went over the side to inspect the damage. She was got off by unloading her coal into *Harde*. Judging by the chart markings, we had run straight through Nova Zembla! But it did not matter, for we were still afloat. Even Oscar Clausen became friendly now, and gave me some films of several angles I had not been able to cover.

Then we came in sight of Vardo. I was ready to jump ashore,

but Sverdrup gave orders that I must not go without him. Together we went to the telegraph office. I watched him push over his papers—a terrific number of words for a cable. Then came the moment to try out my last card. I followed with my comparatively short story in the same care-free manner, and together we departed. I asked him how much time we had ashore. No hurry, he wanted to visit some friends. I called on the British Consul and asked him to tell the telegraph operator to cable my story at priority rate. There were three sets of charges and Sverdrup's was going at the ordinary rate. He thought the *Sunday Times* was a Sunday edition of the London daily *Times*. Was it for me to explain the difference! We arrived in Vardo on the Saturday.

One of our messages was going to be "spiked", for whichever appeared first would kill the other. He thought his message would be published one day ahead of mine. He was going to fox me to the end—so he thought. But it was not to be. His story took two days to transmit. Mine appeared exclusively on the Monday. Neither of us knew this until we had both arrived home.

Now to get my pictures to London first. Every other officer carried a camera, and knew not only how to use it, but how to make money by it. If they had a chance of pipping me on the post they would, which would have been the bitterest blow of all. So I had to think hard. Pretending I wanted to post a letter, I heard there was a fast mail-boat leaving Tromso a few hours after *Sviatagor* would leave. Thank heaven we were due to stop there on the way back. *Sviatagor* sailed very slowly compared with the mail-boats. Sverdrup was friendly now he thought he had beaten me, but did not want me to leave the ice-breaker until we reached Bergen. By the time we made Tromso I was ready to go ashore.

While the greetings were being made forward a deck hand helped me to put my luggage, boat and all, ashore, out of sight behind the offices. The great ice-breaker cast off again, and I peeped at her sailing off down the fjord without me. I boarded the mail-boat, and soon we passed dear old *Sviatagor* very closely. How I cheered that unsporting crowd, and had the laugh of my life, for I felt that my cable would be printed first, and that unless I was shipwrecked I would arrive home with my pictures days before them.

It was soothing to sit with the old captain in the saloon, after three months of daily worry getting pictures and stories and wondering if these would reach London in time to be of use. To get my boat aboard the British ship at Bergen I had to prove myself an explorer! The same technique was necessary to get the boat in the London train.

Then came the pleasant part of the trip—the taxi ride to the office on Sunday evening. Were they waiting for me? I had the *Daily Graphic* to myself next day and the best part of the week. I was a temporary hero with a halo which might last until the next foreign scoop.

No one ever led me a bigger dance than Sverdrup. Because he had made a Press pact, misunderstandings arose between otherwise decent people, and the Russians were accused of trying to recapture the ice-breaker on a mercy voyage.

Anyway, the *Daily Graphic* got the first news and pictures, and that was what mattered. I was sorry that the commander had not been frank with me at the beginning, before luring me over the snows on a wild-goose chase. We could have made arrangements suitable to both our editors. I could have taken the pictures and the *Times* could have had the story. But Sverdrup chose the artful way—giving himself the exclusive Press rights over a British ship engaged on a rescue expedition.

After we saw the paper to "bed", as they say when everything editorially has been done to it, I collected my luggage into a taxi and went on to my flat in Lisle Street. Strangers were in possession. They did not know the landlord's address. There was no way of reaching me, for I had been cut off for three months. I wondered what had happened to my clothes and belongings.

I went early to the office next morning to revel in the sunshine of publicity, clean my cameras and make out my expenses. Calvert had other ideas. He sent me on a job in Bedford Square while I was anticipating a couple of weeks' holiday.

It was Margot Asquith I was to photograph. Margot herself came to the door and sharply asked me what I wanted. She had a charming costume and hat, and had certainly made a careful toilet for the occasion. Someone had blundered in the office, for she had been kept waiting five minutes! Was she furious? Not knowing this, I answered her back when she very snappily told me she had no time to waste being photographed. She had phoned the office very early asking for a photograph to

accompany her autobiography in the *Sunday Times*. At that moment Margot certainly thought something of herself.

What the hell, I thought! My first book is also on sale round the corner, and I have just come down from the top of the world to be bossed about by a very famous man's widow. I made her smile before I finished, and went back to the office for the next job—collecting my expenses. But it was all in the day's work. I put my gear away, drew the cash, and got a week off to get back on an even keel.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### AN UNFORGETTABLE CHARACTER—NORTHCLIFFE

I COLLECTED MY BELONGINGS AND took a room at the Hampden Club among the bachelor journalists, engineers and travellers—a gay, care-free lot. We had good hotel service for a very reasonable price. Back in the office, I had to take on the ordinary round again.

I met Dannhorn, my Ruhleben friend, sometimes, but he had now set off on another course, to transform an ordinary technical journal into a profitable undertaking. On the side he became a musical and dramatic critic. As we took different ways, I thought of the Ruhleben laboratory, where we had watched green and red algæ and amœbean growths deciding to take the right or wrong turning. Some became plants, and others became animals. Dann knew all about this, and used to enlarge on Blagdon's theories. He told us to go to Kew Gardens and see how some plants had messed up their lives by becoming insect-eaters. This was supposed to be a warning to humans to decide on what they were going to do with their lives.

That is just how we differed. Dann made his course right from the start, knowing what he was going to attain. I never bothered. Life seemed such a short span of a little pleasure and a lot of pain. Dann told me to abandon the camera and stick to scribbling—learn it properly and get the money and kudos it brought. He was right, but I could not drop the camera. I was the mechanic, and liked using my hands to make something. The camera came after the carpenter's tools. With it I could turn out a finished job of pictures—something complete and quick. Dann used to watch me carpentering in the camp, doing odd jobs for other prisoners, not always with admiration. He was the man higher up, as O'Henry would say, while I, true to the laboratory test, remained the onion, but a happy onion. Only a happy camera-man can make happy pictures. Note the faces in any picture papers, and, gay or gloomy, those faces reflect the mood of the photographer.

A special line of mine was interviewing celebrities. I found it easy to make them talk. My most interesting interview was with

the world's greatest newspaper owner, Lord Northcliffe, and happened like most good things, accidentally, on the Riviera. The talks were spread over three days. This is how it happened.

After the Great War the Graphic Publications owed me two hundred pounds, which I put aside for a special purpose: to give my mother the holiday of her life—a spell on the sunny Riviera. I had told her so much about the Continent of pre-war days she wanted to come and see some of my old haunts. I wangled an extension to my three weeks holiday, during which I was to cover the social side for the firm. Never before out of England, she marvelled at the idea. She got everything nicely packed days before our departure, even to the tiny stove to make a cup of English tea in case there was none abroad.

The sea trip was her one dread, which is why she did not return to America with me before the Great War. The short Channel crossing was the worst ever, and we were not only very sick, but flat out. Scores of times have I made the crossing, but never seen such seas running. She soon recovered when we sailed into the calm waters of Calais. From that moment she was all agog, and did not doze all the way to Paris.

A night in the Grand Hotel made her fit for the long train journey south. Although she was ageing, she was so excited she went from one window to another for fear of missing something. Only during the night did she sleep, after I had tucked her in well and talked her drowsy. The variety of delicious foods and smooth wines, bracing air and all sorts of nice people talking to her made her young again.

For the first week we stayed at Cannes, at the Restaurant Edward VII. There were only a few rooms, but here was served the best food. The cooking was something she had never seen before. With their patience and perfect manners, the chefs showed her how it was done. In the evening we went to the Casino to hear some of the world's greatest artists. I pointed out celebrities, hitherto only names to her. When she actually spoke to some of the unapproachables, her happiness was complete.

We had a very full week, and then moved on to Nice, where it sounded as if only English was spoken. The hotels were full of British nobility, Members of Parliament, Cabinet ministers, newspaper and industrial magnates—in fact the whole chromatic scale of British society was in possession, represented right down to the honest-to-goodness Cook's tourists. No wonder the

French call their sea-front Promenade des Anglais, said my mother, for only English could be heard. We had two large rooms at the top of the hotel, so that she could see for miles. I will skip what we did until I met Lord Northcliffe.

One morning early our *café complet* had arrived with eggs, delicious confitures and the *Petit Nicois*. The first headline was, "Northcliffe is Dead". Although I had never met him, it was a shock to me to read of the death of the camera-man's greatest friend. He was appreciated by all, for it was he who raised all branches of journalism and made Press-photography a respectable and well-paid job.

Why I should dash off to Villa Rocquebrune, his Riviera home, I don't know. I left my mother in bed reading the *Continental Daily Mail*, and arranged with a taxi-man to take me to the scene of the tragedy for three pounds. There must be crowds of interesting people coming and going, I thought.

The villa was high on the cliff, and the entrance drive was higher still. I remember entering the small gate and passing down a steep pathway, past a pond of lively goldfish that lay under an awning of orange and tangerine trees. On my right was the Mediterranean at its bluest, with the morning sun drying off the light mist.

I rang the bell. A man-servant in knee-breeches, stockings and slippers appeared. How was Lord Northcliffe? I asked. His lordship was quite well, and at the moment was in his bath! I thought of my three pounds wasted on the taxi ride. Did I want to see his lordship? Yes, of course. Heaven only knew what about, so taken aback was I. The servant returned with the message Northcliffe would see no one. I could wait, I said. It was no use, said the servant. He shut the door and I moved away.

It was a lovely morning, and after my disappointment I sat on the seat near the goldfish and picked tangerines. I had finished half a dozen, and was still shooting the pips at the fish, when the servant reappeared. It was no use my hanging about, for his lordship would see no one. I told him that he need not get worried, and gave him my card. He took it, and told me to wait outside the grounds. He added that they did not like strangers hanging about.

So back I went to my seat, thinking what a chump I was to come on a wild-goose chase without first verifying facts. While



I was thus brooding out popped a short man, like a robin out of a bush. It was Humphrey Davy, the language secretary. His lordship would see me when he had finished his toilet. Panic set in. What could I say I had come about? I tried to think of something clever and up to Carmelite House standard. Davy showed me into a study off the hall. I saw a row of Robert Louis Stevenson's books. I was just taking in the simple surroundings when a lovely voice called through the partition:

"Come on, Mr. Brown; see our gardens while Northcliffe gets ready."

This was Lady Northcliffe. She was as lovely as her voice. She led me down to the gardens while naming this and that place in that wonderful sea and landscape, so varied and full of colour. After a few minutes she said she would get on her way to her shopping in Nice. Northcliffe would not be long. Was I worried? I had no idea of what I was going to say to him. How would he take it if I told him the truth?

It was like sitting in a gigantic piece of stage scenery, so steep were the gardens. Below me was the Mediterranean, shimmering like a sheet of jewels. Suddenly from above I heard a loud, incisive voice:

"Brown, come up here. No, don't bother; I will come down to you."

I looked up, and there, under a very big hat, was a big face lit up by a friendly smile. He hurried down the steep path, and wasted no time on preliminaries. He bluntly asked me what I thought of his newspapers. And he meant it. I said his news services were so efficient that if he did get a doubtful story he was so far ahead of competition there was always time to verify or "spike" it. He was pleased, thank heaven. Any nervousness I felt was dispelled by his downright manner. He spoke as if he had waited just to hear my opinion.

He wanted discussion, so I said that some of the features were not too hot for the thousands of average readers. He fired two or three questions at once, and picked on things I was particularly interested in. He referred to his news services again. I said that we read the *Evening News* in the *Daily Graphic* office to clip the first news cuttings for the afternoon's job. Before his paper was on the streets we read the placards. Our editor had compelled the drivers of the *Evening News* vans parked on our side of the road to move back on their own side so that we could read the news.

That put Northcliffe in good humour. But not for long. What had I to say about the features? Some were brilliant, but some were no use at all. "For example," I said, "take your 'Gourmet' feature, which tells me where I can get a nice lunch for one pound seventeen shillings and eightpence—a full week's wages for a Shrewsbury carpenter before the Great War." What I and thousands of his other readers would like to know was, where could we get a lunch for *half a crown* as good as those served to the staff in Carmelite House.

"So you don't like 'Gourmet's' stuff, then?" said his lordship snappily.

That was not the point. The bulk of the *Evening News* readers were *half-crown* lunchers. Anybody with money to burn knew where to get the best value for it. This did not go over well, and worse was to follow. He switched to his American tour. He said we were much better off than the Americans for newspapers. I let that pass.

Then his lordship went on to talk about building and housing. In spite of the fact that Americans had the biggest buildings in the world, we were still the best builders, he said. This I could not pass. As far as utility, convenience and hygiene were concerned we were the worst, I said. We were still building houses without bathrooms, and in some cases lavatories still at the bottom of the garden. Northcliffe went off the deep end. I saw my chance of ever having a job with him vanish when a very angry look came over his face. He simply flowed with argument. I bluntly told him he was wrong. Because he had seen de-luxe places in England, some with very graceful lines, he thought all our buildings were the same. I found nothing democratic about Northcliffe. He was thinking of the class he had moved up into, and I was thinking about building in general. But he let me tell him something just the same.

A house was for working and living in. Everything should be made to function properly. The insides should be designed for comfort and to save foot-work for the woman. I described the fittings the ordinary working woman gets in the smallest of American houses, with the kitchen a pleasure to cook in. Make a newspaper feature of this: good houses for all, especially for those who do the hardest work and have the least time to enjoy a home. Find a Ford for good modern building. And then I invited him to come to see some *new* houses they were putting up,

rows of them, with tiny patches of gardens and kitchens like cupboards.

I went on to tell him that there was no such a thing as a jamming door in the United States. First-class hot-water arrangements were not only automatic, but within the reach of the majority. The more Northcliffe argued the less inclined I was to compromise. When he mentioned our ancient buildings and wonderful castles and country mansions, he exploded when I replied that I thought we were talking about places for the people to live in, to bring up a family decently. So heated did he become that at last I said:

"I will bet you ten pounds to one that even you cannot find in any of your houses, offices, and warehouses, the doors, windows, cupboards and anything made of wood functioning properly."

"Damn it, Brown, you are right," he almost shouted.

As it happened, we had once seen Northcliffe from our windows trying to open one of his own windows stuck with paint. He was very temperamental, and was up and down like mercury. But he simmered down and listened. What would I do about the bad housing conditions? Start at the lowest grade of building and give a family three times the space they have now. Not enough building space, he said. Not enough? When I reminded him that the world's population could stand on the Isle of Wight he looked surprised, and asked me if that was a fact. He could work it out for himself. I mentioned the wide-open spaces of Britain alone. He said we must have the working classes where the work was. Then take the factories to the open spaces, I said. And why did the biggest families seem to get the smallest houses? I asked.

Then he asked me my politics. When I told him that I had no politics and could not understand them anyway, he stared at me in silence. Knowing that Northcliffe suddenly took quick decisions about anything he fancied which would sell his newspapers, I hoped to get him interested in a national building scheme. The *Daily Mail* building exhibition was a good effort, I said, but that touched only the fringe of the problem.

He steered the conversation to other topics, but the building question kept cropping up. He remembered the simplicity of American hotels and the perfect service because the staff had one-tenth of the foot-work. In England we boasted about using the same methods we used a hundred years ago.

Se we chatted into the morning. He took it all very well now. He told me to come and see him when I reached London. He agreed that the building industry needed looking into.

But Northcliffe's politics? He was right at the peak of his "Shaking-hands-with-murder" period. Why he went out so madly against Russia I cannot imagine, for a more thoroughgoing dictator never lived. The pity of it was that when the Russian leaders read the Northcliffe Press they thought they were reading the opinion of the whole British nation. They did not know that there were other things in Carmelite House worth reading about. Even to me Northcliffe dug up some Bolshevik plots, but I did not attempt to reason with him about his politics.

I just mentioned that I did not think it wise to organise mass hatred against any nation, no matter how bad we thought their system. It would be funny if sometime in the future we needed the help of Russia. There was a hint of this in my "Germany in Dissolution", printed in 1920.

Then there was the Indian problem. What did I think of that? I switched him quickly back to the Irish problem right on our doorstep, ripening to rottenness, I said. That problem would soon be dealt with by the Government, who were shortly to take drastic steps. I said I knew so little about international politics we could not get to any common ground. One of his staff told me Northcliffe had eleven secretaries, so I suppose he must have had one for politics too. Still, it seemed a pity that a man with such outstanding influence could not think beyond his newspapers. The Russian mob must be crushed, India would have to be disciplined, and apparently Ireland could go to the devil. It seemed a disastrous attitude for a leading member of a conquering nation, I thought.

I asked him what he was going to do about the Germans not disarming, but he merely shrugged his massive shoulders. Later he said that the Germans were now on the floor, and would stay down. And this was after he had taken his famous tour in Germany, when he said every other woman was in an interesting condition, and published it.

He asked which I liked best, carpentering or camera work. "Carpentering," I answered, given the same conditions, status and wages as a camera-man.

"So manual work is your special disease," he said seriously.

But whatever he said, or however angry he was, he was wonder-

ful to listen to. I have never met a quicker brain or a better talker—three times as fast as the normal speaker. Mentally he rushed me all over the place. When I was too slow to answer, he would answer his own questions three at a time. He could talk himself into a fury, then he would simmer down to a chuckle and ask me if I knew that a Press-photograph was worth a thousand words.

"Yes, and more, when the photo is exclusive," I answered.

"Brown, you don't know that I am the father of Press-photography, do you?" said Northcliffe, breaking into a lighter vein.

"We do, you know. Have you never noticed a Press-photographer, after he has a scoop, come to the *Daily Mail* office to kneel on the steps of Carmelite House and pray, 'Our father, who art in Carmelite House, give us this day another scoop' . . ."

I got no farther, for Northcliffe nearly toppled over the flowery edge, roaring with laughter. Occasionally I noticed the guests peering down from the terrace, wondering what Northcliffe was laughing at.

Well, that was the end of that morning's meeting. He asked me to take a picture of his directors and himself. When I returned next day to meet him at the villa, I noticed some people with big names who had been waiting while their host was skylarking with me. John Prioleau was there, the man who first made motor reports interesting reading for all. As I focussed on the group, I thought what a wonderful team Northcliffe had around him. This was where they worked out their big plans. What a team to belong to! How long could I last on his staff? I wondered. Not so long, unless I joined the chorus and sang the same tune, I thought. How lightly they seemed to tread in that well-dressed circle!

Still, I would think it over. I compared all this with the old firm, Doctor Bulloch, Mr. Will and the rest of my Tallis House friends. You did know where you were with them. Not so much glamour, perhaps, nor so hectic; but they never ordered you about. What did I think of this or that? Would I like to go here or there? That was the way they managed their staffs.

Now listen to what he did for me next day! In some of his moods Northcliffe was like a boy full of mischief. He told me to meet him at Mont Agel Golf Course, where he arranged for me to take Sir Ernest Cassell and family, Winston Churchill and most of the stars there at the time. When his own man, dear old Tim

Console, approached, Northcliffe shooed him away! Tim had been sent specially to cover this heavy week of arrivals and departures, yet his boss would not let him get a picture.

Do you remember the excitement when it was rumoured that Winston Churchill had suddenly plunged into painting pictures? Neither editors nor public would believe it, because no one had seen him at it. So Tim Console was striving, with all his monkey cunning and knowledge of languages, to get a picture of Churchill actually doing his stuff. He was rebuffed at every point. His art editors—he had four then: *Daily Mail*, *Evening News*, *Weekly Despatch* and the *Times*—all crying out for the picture. So desperate did Tim become that he hid in Winston Churchill's bedroom, only to be turned out by the future Prime Minister's body-guard. He had scouts everywhere, and paid hotel servants to find the pitch of the painter. The funny thing was that I had not started to work until Northcliffe started me. To make matters worse for Tim, Northcliffe arranged a daily programme for me. Did I know that Lord this or that was here and so and so was coming next week?

It has been said that Mr. Churchill has now grown to full height and developed his gifts to a great usefulness to the nation. From our lowly sphere I can add something to that. He has become the ideal subject for the camera-man. At this time on the Riviera he was one of the worst. How he barked at the Press-photographer! He always revelled in publicity, but pretended otherwise. Many a picture he spoilt not only for himself, but for his friends. Never shall I forget the departure of General Pershing from Victoria Station—a historic occasion: America's great General leaving Europe after helping to fight her war.

We were all set on the distinguished group against a background of Stars and Stripes, Union Jack and flowers, and just waiting for Mr. Winston Churchill, representing the King, to fill the remaining place. Never have the officials been so anxious that we should get that picture, in spite of the bad light of that murky morning. At last he arrived. But would he shape up with the rest? Not on your life! So we had to tell him straight to get in or get out. If he did not want to be photographed, the rest of the party did. We had not then got the electric Sachas for snap-shotting in the dark, and we did not want to disturb the party by blowing off the ordinary explosive flashlight powder. Winston kept bobbing about in front of General Pershing, our centre-piece! Then it

was that we had to take a firm hand with him to get the picture. How he has improved since then, for he has even learnt to smile in his photographs!

So here we go back to the Riviera, to see how Lord Northcliffe manœuvred the scoop of the season for me against his own man. Next day, as he drove from Villa Rocquebrune to Nice, he told me he was lunching with Churchill at the Casino Municipal. Could I take the two of them together? I asked. No, not possible, as the public would think they were in league. His very words.

"You are both too great for them to think that," I answered.

Northcliffe knew the photographic distance, and told me where to stand, behind a carriage. He would march Churchill out of the Casino towards me at exactly five minutes past one. And he did it right on the minute, both in step.

"Do you want another?" he whispered as he passed, distracting his guest's attention away to the left.

He did it again, so skilfully that Churchill never knew that he had been snapped. Northcliffe came back to me after his guest had left. Was there anything else he could do for me that day? he asked. "Does Winston Churchill really paint?" I said.

"Good God! yes. But I dare not tell you where. He won't have it at any price. He even had Console thrown out for attempting to snap his easel. He told me so himself," said Northcliffe.

Then that boyish look of mischief came into his face again.

"Go very circumspectly out to the river-bed by the race-course, and if he sees you, don't tell him I told you he was there," he said, and disappeared among the crowd to reach his car.

My mother was already sitting in a carriage, so we waited for a minute until I told one of Console's scouts that Churchill was going to the Italian frontier to paint the Roches Rouge, miles away in the opposite direction. We drove round the Casino block, and when we came back I noticed that the *Daily Mail* car had vanished. I dared not even talk to Tim, for he could read your very thoughts. Before you met him you had to be sure your plates were on the plane for England. He was certainly the world's hottest camera-man, and here was his boss playing practical jokes on him to the advantage of a competitor. In case Tim was still finessing me, we drove towards the back of the town, and then looped to the main coast road on the way to the race-course.

When we got to the bridge there was no one in sight, and not

even the car. I scouted down the lane running between the bridge and the race-course, but there was still no sign of anyone. So I left my mother while I went prospecting on the other side of the bridge. The Octroi officials looked me over, so I made myself known. They had seen no one go to the bed of the river.

Eagerly I scrambled over the rocks, and then it struck me that his Lordship might be having a lark on me this time. There was not much water in the very wide river-bed—only a stream flowing under the centre arch, one of half a dozen. Then I heard a faint laugh. I dropped on to my hands and knees and worked round between the gullies until I had a view of what was going on under the centre one.

What a picture greeted me! There was "Winnie" and his easel. He was slapping paint on to a big canvas to his heart's content. He was painting the arch and the rocks in the background, on one of which was his faithful bodyguard, keeping a sharp look-out for intruders. The artist was enjoying himself. As he splashed on the colour he turned round to a group of French workmen chattering to our future Prime Minister.

Could I creep near enough without alarming the guard perched on the rocks? I crept forward to within thirty yards and exposed a plate. Then to fifteen, which gave a much better view of the group, the canvas, the arch and the artist. I got closer, now covered by the workmen. What a time he was having! I would not disturb him by asking permission, for I knew what would happen. I could not miss this chance, for the world was waiting to know if Winston Churchill really painted.

I took several pictures and went to five yards, the ideal distance, without being noticed. I finished the job and put the camera out of sight. Then I sidled into the group. With my black Foreign Office hat I might have been a Frenchman.

It was good to watch "Winnie", like a boy with his first box of paints. Nor was he mean with his colours. The guard was still on the rocks when I left, so I snapped him too, and gave him the picture.

I planed my plates to London. Two days later I took some copies of the *Daily Graphic* to Northcliffe—the picture of himself and Churchill marching across the road with an extreme "eyes left", on the front page of the *Daily Graphic*. He was as pleased as if he had never had a picture published in his life. Under-



neath were the pictures of Churchill painting, with the French workers admiring him. A scoop for those soft days.

His lordship put in one more good morning's work for me at the mountain golf-course, where he lined up more celebrities. He worked hard to get the names and titles correctly spelt, and made the subjects remain in their places until I had got the captions and the names left to right. He finished up by giving my mother lunch at the club house. To her, shaking hands with Northcliffe was like shaking hands with God.

Why did he do all this for me? I don't know. Just good nature, to do me a good turn, and amusing himself in his own way. His papers were his living, his hobby and his pleasure. And he loved a joke, even against himself. Only a few months before this I had made the Arctic scoop against the Northcliffe Press, for he himself arranged the special commissions. He mentioned the expedition only once, and just laughed about it.

After lunch he said:

"When you have packed up your plates, hand them to me, and I will drop them into the *Daily Graphic* office before I go to the *Daily Mail*."

He would take any Press-photographer's stuff back to any address. He was free and friendly with everybody to do with the Press game, from the office-boys to the editors on or off his own staffs.

When I was once stuck for a passenger going through to London, the Cook's agent on Monte Carlo station said he could find no one but Lord Rothermere. But he dared not ask him to do me a favour. So I entered his lordship's compartment, and very politely asked him if he could oblige. He was furious and refused.

"Well, your brother often does it for us—willingly too," I said, but he barked and nearly blew me out of his Blue Train. Later I funked seeing Northcliffe in London for fear he gave me a job.

Now Lord Northcliffe had done my job for me, my mother and I settled down to enjoy the rest of the time without the camera. I made it top note everywhere for her, and the events of those wonderful weeks stored up such a memory for her that she even draws on it when the war wearies her. She can still remember every hotel, the music and operas, the food at the restaurants tucked away in the hinterland of mountains. Yes, she still goes on that Riviera holiday, switching on her memory as anyone else switches on the radio.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ANGLO-TURKISH WAR WHICH DID NOT HAPPEN

**W**HY DID THAT GREAT Prime Minister, Lloyd George, allow himself to be persuaded to agree with Greece, France and Italy to throw the Turks out of Europe after the Great War? The mystery is still unsolved.

You remember what happened. The Greeks, safe in the knowledge that three strong nations with victorious armies stood behind them, suddenly attacked their old enemy. They were cut down like corn. When Lloyd George called to the colonies to help to throw out the "barbarians", they blew him a political raspberry. That lapse, which put an end politically to the war-weary statesman, had one silver lining. Out of the chaos grew a friendship between Turkey and Britain which, thank heaven, has withstood all tests.

One morning I was sent to photograph some troops at Waterloo leaving for the new battle-front, Turkey! In charge was Major F. C. F. Ewald—a friend I had met during the arrival of the Inter-Allied Missions in Berlin—all spick and span, ordering about his junior officers. His chief in Berlin was General Morgan, one of the few officers who knew that the Germans were not disarming. He wrote a book about it, but few read it.

When I had finished my pictures at the station, Major Ewald chaffed me on having to stay in dreary old London while there was a war starting in Turkey—a wonderful chance for something new in photographs. I waved him off, a picture of smartness; he had to be, for he was a regular officer. London certainly seemed very commonplace as I went back to the office and thought of my friend starting on a lovely sea trip right down to Gibraltar, through the Mediterranean to Constantinople, a city I had dreamed about.

As I put my pictures on the art editor's table, Calvert handed me a paper. It was a written job, which meant that you did not sing it about the office, but just faded out as if you were going on a christening. Would I leave on the first train and boat to Calais to catch the Simplon Orient express to Constantinople? I simply glided out of that office with cameras and plates to last for months.

The train journey was like one I had made from New York to

San Francisco as an emigrant, and took the same time, a week. We started off a fine fast train. The food and cooking changed at every frontier. My companion, very determined to have the lower bunk whoever won the toss, was the Army Paymaster, also going to Turkey. He was a good companion, both on the journey and when we arrived in that dream city.

The food got worse and worse as we neared Constantinople. Also the engines were changed at every frontier, and became slower and slower. But we got there, and there was another lovely land to see. I stayed at the Tokatlian, famed for its food and gypsy orchestra.

My first job was to photograph our troops as they arrived by sea. The heat was terrific. I figured out how long it would take Major Ewald and his troops to arrive, for I was determined to snap him sweating up that dusty hill of Pera on his way to headquarters. It came off according to plan. I selected a nice cool spot sheltered by trees. By the time the troops could reach me they would be covered with dust. And they were. All the same, they made a very impressive show in wide formation up the hill, carrying a good deal of kit, full band playing, with two lines of drums in front, and all wearing tropical helmets. I took my picture, and then shouted to Ewald, "Welcome to our city."

When he saw me he nearly broke his line.

"Percy Brown!" he shouted. "How the hell did you get out here?"

It seemed a miracle to the major, for this was just before the newspapers began using planes for long journeys.

And who should be my next good companion but Commander Bate, who had taken me to Bergen in *Sviatagor*. He gave me lunch in his destroyer, *Vanquisher*. We met many times after that. There was not a discord on that Turkish job, everybody wanted to help me, and no other camera-men were there!

I won't tell you much about the war, which was not so much a war as a political massacre that was left to General Tim Harrington to clear up. "The greatest catastrophe in human history is rapidly approaching" was how Reuter summed up the position. What a Turkish tangle the politicians let us into! Several times a real war nearly started after the Greeks were cut to pieces. For them it was a massacre. That is why I could not see the Greeks beating the Italians during this war. I saw them then in their dainty slippers and long stockings. Before they resisted and

defeated Mussolini, the Greek nation must have been reborn. How I ate my words when they won their war practically unaided! No wonder the world thought the British crazy, after the humiliating show we put up in the Balkans. So the Greeks and the British learnt their lessons together in this war.

Well, there were good pictures to be got easily. Everybody and everything were so accessible. Yes, even Sir Horace Rumbold and his staff wanted to be in pictures, for they thought it was going to be a big show instead of a damp squib. I got in right with the admirals and generals, and I could not go wrong. I did once miss the main story, and only through Lieutenant Hugh Leveson-Gower's efforts was I able to pick up the pieces, as they say in Fleet Street.

General Harrington was to meet some Turkish officials a few miles along the Asiatic coast. With Ercole the ciné man our motor-boat landed in the wrong village! When we got to the right one the conference was over and the officials had left in a destroyer. Luckily the Turks were not good camera-men, for even a bad photo would have floored me in London.

I went to headquarters and saw among the journalists General Sir Frederick Maurice, then on the retired list, and acting as the *Daily News* special correspondent. From him I heard that Lieut. Hugh N. Leveson-Gower, aide to Harrington, had taken some snapshots. I raced round to him, and during some formal chatter he told me he had some good films he wanted developing. I could certainly take care of that job, for which he offered me the full use for my paper! He also got me a permit for any future events. My luck was back with me.

I gave him a set of prints, sent the films to London, and was applauded by the editor for the aide's good work. Some years later I heard that he had married a princess. I hope he is happy, for he was a prince to me during that imitation war. He put me on many good stories and showed me how to get them. I went to Chanak with the Guards and Sherwood Foresters to snap them at the "ready" in extraordinary surroundings.

One morning I thought a war had really started between England and Turkey. Our engineers went outside their lines and blew up some farmhouses. All the roads were mined and trenched. Still the shooting did not start—at least, nothing serious. What would have happened to our small army on that thin lip of Chanak I dread to imagine, in spite of the fact that we

had a powerful navy, which gave brilliant searchlight displays every night across the water.

I stayed several days in Chanak, for here seemed to be the flash-point. The preparations made useful pictures; machine-gun posts of the latest pattern were all along the lines, and fingers were itching on the triggers. But the tension subsided. As I had sent a surfeit of pictures showing our side of this quiet little war, I wanted to photograph some Turkish soldiers for a change. As yet I had seen none. As there seemed to be some activity across No Man's Land, I asked our commanding officer if he would let me pass the barricades. At my own risk, he said. That was always the position with a pressman, anyway. No one knew what might be the attitude of the Turks towards a camera-man. The lure of a good story decided me to try it.

That evening in the flea-infested hotel I met a man with an old Ford vegetable van. Would he take me across to the Turkish lines if I guaranteed his safety? I could not guarantee my own, anyway. How could he, a Greek, when they were shooting his countrymen every day? But every man has his price, and he finally said he could not think of it under five English pounds! Just for about a quarter of a mile.

So in the morning early the Guards raised the wire barricades, and we rumbled through. I told him to go very slowly, in case the Turks took us for a tank. He was flattered. The officer in charge of the advanced machine-gun post let us through his barricade, saying that if I must be a bloody fool I mustn't expect any help from him. We trundled on across No Man's Land, dodging pot-holes. The spot we had selected for contact seemed to be very lightly held by the Turks. Only the sentry was visible at the moment.

Behind us the eyes of the British Army followed the crooked route of our "box of nails". Half-way over nothing had happened. We moved on slowly, with affected nonchalance. We approached the sentry like a tradesman delivering goods. No sooner had we entered the Turkish zone than we were suddenly surrounded by a score of horsemen. I cannot imagine how they had remained invisible before. They seized the Greek, who began to dither with fright. He pointed to me—as his saviour, I suppose. I gushed out some French to the officer in charge. He replied in fluent German! I supposed he expected a white flag to precede the parley.

After a minute or two I drove the hostility from his face with some friendly patter. Now that the danger of any friction between our two nations was gone, my editor had sent me over with his compliments, I said. The Turkish officer stared, and asked how long the new situation had come about. I replied that General Tim Harrington was already arranging to meet Rafet Pasha in Mudania. This was only a half truth, but it passed, and we talked for half an hour, after which he sent his men back to cover.

I got my Greek free after I had made a picture of the incident. Then I suggested some pictures of the officer and his section. He willingly obliged, and brought back his men. I shivered when I heard a bell ring in the folds of the ground, but nothing happened. We shook hands cordially. All we wanted now was to get back to the good old British army. As my jittery chauffeur turned the car round I handed the officer a packet of English cigarettes, which pleased him greatly. He gave me one of his, and we smoked symbolically for a moment, saluted each other, and parted.

As we re-entered our own lines we met a large party of infantry ready to march. The officer in charge was coming to the rescue if the Turks had attempted to take us away. It was nice to know that, and I was glad to get back without incident, which might have started a real war.

A subject which made the most arresting pictures were the thousands of refugees driven from their homes. They packed their belongings on carts, collected their cattle, and started the long trek from the enemy, after setting fire to their homesteads. Even in those days there was a scorched-earth policy. I saw processions of camels led by donkeys, herds of hungry cattle, railway wagons and vans with their roofs piled high with men, women and children among their belongings. Never have I seen such acute misery. A few weeks before they had been living peaceful, contented lives, and then, after the politicians had hatched an unsuccessful plot, they had to leave everything and be thankful to get penniless and homeless to safety.

Among all this misery was Doctor Nansen, whom I had met in Norway trying to persuade Captain Sverdrup to let me join the Arctic expedition to rescue *Solovei*. The doctor was in charge of repatriation arrangements. He invited me to join him on his tour of inspection before devising a plan for coping with the

crisis. Greeks were dying like flies for want of everything. Noel Baker was acting as the doctor's secretary, being the only one who could speak Greek.

In Rodosta I was mistaken for a doctor. While I was getting some elevation from which to photograph the massed thousands of refugees on the shore, a woman mistook my camera bag for a doctor's medicine chest. She led me into a room where another woman was giving birth and rushed me to the bedside. What a shock I had! To me it looked more like a murder than a birth. I shouted down to Doctor Nansen and his secretary, hoping they could do something about it.

There was no need to look for pictures: these met me at every step. One shows Doctor Nansen besieged by hundreds seeking food and repatriation. His great personality and tall, imposing figure gave him the atmosphere of a saviour as he moved among the crowds. Solid masses of refugees were still arriving and making matters worse. The stench was terrible, and there was no water, food, or sanitary arrangements. When the Greek armies were beaten they had just panicked, without thought of where they were going.

Until Doctor Nansen and his secretary arrived they had been without a lead. Their own fat priests lay sleeping on their bundles, replete with rations they had brought with them. The chaos was cleared up by the American Red Cross. By some miracle they produced transport for the miserable people. It was months before I could forget the sight of that poor woman surrounded by her helpless friends. One English midwife would have saved the baby and mother, who both died that evening. How I wished I could have tackled just one more odd job! I funk'd even trying, for fear I would have made a worse job than nature. I was hoping that Doctor Nansen would know the rudiments of midwifery among his other scientific accomplishments.

A tragedy nearly happened to me through ignorance of Turkish palace manners. I took several pictures of the old Sultan of Turkey on a throne that was due for collapse at any moment. It was collapsing as I took the last picture of him attending a function at the mosque.

The Crown Prince Abdul Medjid was a better subject.. He was a cultured and gifted painter, and had a very beautiful little daughter. He let me take several photos in the grounds of his own palace and also in the salons. After the first introduction

I thought I had bowed enough. Bowing is difficult to keep up while managing a tripod and camera and sliding about polished floors. The two equerries kept repeating:

*"Inclinez, inclinez, Monsieur."*

Anything they did, even the handing a cigarette, was accompanied by a deep bow before and after the act. They invited me to lunch. It was very good up to a point. That point was a small piece of twisted copper wire a quarter of an inch long which I nearly swallowed in a mouthful of delicious savoury rice. Perhaps it was a mistake. My appetite was gone, and I could eat nothing more.

I kept the wire as a souvenir and a reminder to mend my manners whenever I revisited Turkish royalty. I must have offended, for there was no car to take me back to Constantinople.

War between Turkey and England being still in the balance, and more British troops arriving, I attended the morning Press conferences at G.H.Q. when I was in the city. A queer feature about this near war with Turkey was that our troops were on the Asiatic side of Constantinople and the French were clothing and arming the Turks against us on the European side of the water. At night they were ferried across to the Turkish armies. We all saw this, and it was owing to the "diplomacy" of a French envoy named Franklin Boullion, whom I met on his way from Ankara. The fact was that he and his Italian colleagues had double-crossed the British officials, who were left to hold the baby and to explain to the British people what it was all about.

I remember one conference in particular. General Sir Frederick Maurice was there, and he introduced me to a fine-looking Turkish journalist who was a captain in the Turkish army! He told him to his face, of course with a smile, that he made journalism and intelligence run together. He got his copy at British headquarters and then just passed it on to his superior officers. The Turk also smiled charmingly.

At the Turkish G.H.Q. I got the tip that war was out of the question unless Britain made it. In spite of the fact that our two allies had "ratted" on us, the new Turkish regime had more in common with Britain. The old politicians were passing out, and a strong nationalist body was already getting control of their country. They were tired of the old tricky diplomacy, and sloughed the old skin, Sultan and all, and produced a new body of fine robust leaders with modern ideas. The greatest of all was



Rafet Pasha, whom we were to meet at Modania at a round-table conference.

Hugh N. Leveson-Gower was true to his word, and kept me in touch with the drift of things. He saw that I had a passage in the destroyer which took General Harrington's large party across to the meeting-place, Modania. This was the last place for a peace conference; so I thought, as I stepped through the mud and misery to the conference chamber. How the place stank! Floating gently on the waters outside our window were mutilated bodies which none seemed to notice in that callous atmosphere.

On one side of the table was General Harrington and his staff, and on the other Rafet Pasha and his suite. In the centre was the interpreter, a British colonel. At the end of the room stood Clare Sheridan, beautifully dressed and wearing a gorgeous Astrakhan fez. Ward Price of the *Daily Mail*, Fergusson of Reuters, and an American journalist sat at the Press table. This conference went on for the best part of two days. The star turn was the interpreter, who translated Harrington's very precise English into luscious-sounding French. Back came the replies like lightning, perfectly translated.

It was a ding-dong battle of wits, during which each clause was debated and hammered out to suit both sides. When knotty points arose, messages were signalled to Whitehall through a battleship standing out in the bay. The principals never left the conference building. As the talks went on the Press began to get hungry. Ward Price asked Fergusson if he knew how to obtain food in those parts.

Enquiries were made, and the four of us went out into the night to what looked more like a blacksmith's shop than a restaurant. After we had waited some time at a very rough table, a large dish of oddments and gravy was placed between us, but nothing to eat it with. The bits of meat might have been anything, but it did not matter, for I had not eaten for a full day. How to tackle the dish was the question.

Ward Price gave us a lead by breaking off four lumps of bread. Then he divided the heap of mystery into four sections with a narrow channel of gravy flowing between. We started devouring the mixture with our fingers. Suddenly there was a shout from Fergusson. He accused Ward Price of tilting the dish to his own advantage and getting more than his fair share of the gravy—by far the best and safest part of the meal. The American agreed.

I was neutral. So we changed corners, letting Fergusson get a dollop of gravy in his bread. Then the table was tipped again. We levelled it up and restarted. This time we all went at it, and made it an "all-in" fight for existence. The American said:

"Look, you guys; here's a perfect example of how you start your wars. You all want each other's gravy!"

When we returned to the conference chamber progress had been made and smiles replaced frowns. There was a good chance of the meeting ending with complete agreement on all points. The Turks were to retain their Constantinople and much more besides. Better still, it was due to General Harrington's skilful handling of the delicate position that a solid and lasting friendship was made between England and Turkey which has stood the test of massed propaganda attacks from Germany and Italy.

What would be our position today if Turkey had joined the Axis? It does not bear thinking about. General Harrington is dead, but his good work lives on. Nor does it matter that those who followed him now get the credit.

My most vivid memories of Constantinople are the mad processions on the Turks' victory day, celebrating their official return to the European side of the Sublime Port; the mosque of St. Sophia, Constantine's Stables, now the greatest bazaar in the world, the Pontoon Bridge between Europe and Asia, with its shops and tugs, the boot-blacks and carriers, skewer roasts and the coffee, the nail-and-wood doctor and the majestic fire-tower from where I took my best panorama picture of the city and the water.

When the conference was finished, arrangements were made for Rafet Pasha's triumphant re-entry into the city. He arrived guarded by two thousand Turkish gendarmerie. As his boat neared the quayside the seething crowd went mad. The reception officials were swept off their feet, while the janissaries, the official slayers of the sheep whose blood was dashed all along the route, got on with their gory job. It was horrible to look at. These dignified officials, dressed in gorgeous costumes of richly braided cloth, standing quietly waiting for Rafet Pasha to put his foot on the quayside, suddenly became savage butchers. That was the signal for the start of the madness. They drew their great curved knives from elaborate sheaths, slashed the poor sheep, whose blood spurted over everybody. A frenzied rush was made for

Rafet Pasha, at whose feet the blood was now flowing. Some of the crowd were trampled on, but no one worried about this. A large shed on which stood hundreds of spectators collapsed by the water-side. Rafet Pasha was jammed right in the middle of the crazy crowd. I got my pictures by climbing a triumphal arch, which collapsed when the crowd followed me. We all fell to the ground also, but as the camera was undamaged, nothing mattered.

This went on right through Constantinople, until the crowds quietened when Rafet Pasha entered St. Sophia. I had had enough, so I left the orgy of savage hero-worship. That night not a Greek was to be seen in the city. The few merchants remaining to mind their businesses stayed shivering behind their iron shutters.

It was on my last day in Constantinople that Frederick Kuh, an American journalist, asked me if I had been inside St. Sophia. I had to say no, for to me it was just another mosque, and I had been inside scores, always interesting and beautiful. We were on our way to catch the Simplon Orient express back to Calais. He put my gear in the cloak-room and postponed my journey for that day. I could go home any day, but might never get another chance of entering the Great Mosque. In the entrance hall were Turkish soldiers already installed on guard.

St. Sophia was imposing enough from the outside. At the door we were asked for passports. Greeks were not allowed inside. That seemed ironic, for a start, considering that the Greeks built this greatest ancient monument more than two thousand years ago!

We moved on into the main hall. I was staggered out of my blaséness. The vastness and the beauty shrink one. High up near the ceiling you can see the large mosaic figure of Christ still shining through the various attempts to obliterate it. The wonderful span of the roof, wider than any I have seen before, made me wonder how the old architects designed the supports for such a colossal weight of stone.

On each side of the vast floor stood huge balls of marble, symbols of an ancient rite. I am not religious—at least, not in the churchy sense—but I thought, as I gazed round me spell-bound, this was surely the place for mass conversions and peace conferences. That grand monument makes you forget time. It makes you feel how small we are and how meaningless our efforts to live merely for the day. There stands that great shrine just as

it stood thirteen hundred years ago. I shall see it again after the war, even if I have to work my passage in a luxury liner.

I spent days in Constantine's Stables, now a wonderful bazaar where you can buy everything. Here I found the miniature camera, the first to be brought to England. The lads thought I was crazy beyond doubt when they saw me use it for the first time. As the Germans had had the free run of the city during the Great War, they flooded the country with their goods, including the latest cameras invented during the war. The Arabs seemed able to speak all languages, but specialised on British and American buyers. They are a wily lot, and you have to mind your step when buying your antiques. One old merchant excused the technique by saying that they were there to sell goods, not to give lessons in antiques. Some of their choicest specimens being sold to the tourists as Smyrna had the mark of good old Kidderminster on them.

The famous Pontoon Bridge linking Europe with Asia takes all traffic except rail. There are shops on one side of this floating unity. When shipping wants to pass up the Bosphorus a powerful tug-boat pulls out on a huge hinge a slice of the middle of the bridge.

Here you will find cunning shoe-blacks who can make a work of art of an odd job. The first time you take a shine you are dazzled by your own brilliancy for the first hundred yards. When you again look at your boots you find them covered with dust—and there is plenty on the roads. Yet you notice that other people's boots and shoes retain their brilliance for the day. Then you are let into a secret, and given a word which you pass on to the boy. You sit again and read your paper. When one shoe is completed the boy does not tell you. He rings a bell. If you don't understand, he taps your sole sharply with his brush. This time when he has finished you off, with an elaborate brushing of your trousers as well, he does not smear a faint coating of fine oil, which picks up every particle of dust in your stride. A small tip gets you a permanent shine. Should you pick up any dust a flutter of a duster brings your shoes back to their original brilliance. You will never discover the secret of this super-shininess. Although the boy has a row of tins of English blacking in his pavement shop window, the real stuff, which he makes himself, is in the plain jar.

Now the carriers. You can see them carrying huge baskets of

melons, which we cannot even move from the floor. They carry a load of furniture on their backs. How they fasten on the several pieces of the suite, including the wardrobe, is a mystery. All you see of the carrier are his two legs staggering along the road. I followed a man through several streets carrying a piano on his back. Their strength is colossal.

The food and accommodation at the hotels were first class. Yet one succulent dish I had was cut from a cone-shaped mass of thin slices of meat roasted in front of a neat charcoal fire. You could eat this any time at the corner of the street, as you would drink your coffee at the stall. The meat is cut in thin slices like ply wood, and pressed together on a long skewer until it is about eighteen inches long, and then placed to roast upright, so that the edges are cooked first. As one customer takes his portion, so the cooking continues, and everyone gets a freshly cooked outside cut. This cooking-spit is often near a boot-black's stand, so you can take a cut off the joint while your shoes are being shined.

The coffee, both Turkish and Italian varieties, is delicious. There being little good alcohol except at the hotels, I drank a lot of coffee. The Italians had the monopoly of the ordinary trade, with their very efficient equipment to make what they called "Express" coffee.

In the cloisters of the mosques I watched an extraordinary faith-healer working on a queue of patients. One pointed to an aching tooth. The doctor diagnosed the trouble while searching for a suitable nail to drive into a large block of wood resting on his knees. Then the patient put down his money, for it was essentially a cash transaction. After the doctor had found what he judged a suitable nail, he began tapping it gently into the wood. Then he would stop and look at the patient and ask if he was better. "Not yet", he would answer. The doctor went on with the tapping until only the head of the nail was visible. I saw one patient, just as the nail was driven right home, jump up and exclaim that he was cured! I watched the same treatment given to the rest of the queue at this open-air surgery, and all said they were cured of their very varied aches and pains. How is it done? I watched for a long time and photographed it, but it is still a mystery to me.

While I watched the French clothing and equipping the Turks, I came up to the famous landmark, the Fire Tower on the

European side of the water. For a Turkish pound I was allowed to climb to the top and see one of the finest views of my experience. I made one of my best panorama photographs. You know how it is done with a small camera? You place it on a tripod dead level and take four or five pictures, starting from the left, taking in all the sea and landscape in view. Then you make some large prints and splice them together and re-photograph the result on a board. Done carefully, no one can detect where the whole thing is joined. Try it.

One day I saw the city's fire-fighters out. They seem to have a different technique from ours, although they pulled the same kind of antiquated fire-engine hand-pump as we used in small towns in England right up to the beginning of this war. When they were called out they made a fire a festive occasion. They foregathered unhurriedly, collected their hand-pump and started towards the district, chanting some queer cries which translated mean simply:

"There's a fire in Pera. Come to the fire. Come to the fire."

The bystanders joined the procession, and the incident was made the excuse for a day off.

## CHAPTER SIX

### LONDON—SERIAL STORY SIDE-LINE

I RETURNED TO LONDON AND the daily round. There was much happening here to make good Press material. Now the war was well behind us, social events increased daily. I marked down the new Italian roof-garden as a good setting for pictures. The hospitality here was most generous. All kinds of invitations flowed my way. I could pick and choose among free tickets for theatres, concerts, banquets and balls. It was a busy time for my mother, for I gave all the entertainment she could take.

Cantelope was chef of the roof-garden, and Jack Howard provided the music with Art Hickman's Jazz Band—the first quiet and musical combination to arrive after the noisy, discordant stuff which for a time had passed for music. I was at the opening and invited to the party. In fact, after the first pictures had appeared I was always welcome. One evening as Jack was packing away his saxophone he said he was taking the band on to a supper ball given specially for the Prince of Wales.

"Come and make a picture of the Prince and the band," he said.

This sounded too much like work, unless the Prince was willing. Jack was such a good sort he persuaded me to join the band for the night. We all piled up in the coach among the instruments and drove to Mayfair. We were received like guests, not bandsmen. A champagne supper was ready for us. This made me think of the days when I played in a small Shrewsbury orchestra, smuggled in at the back, and lucky to get any refreshments, although we sometimes played all night. Jack handed me a B-flat cornet to play while waiting for an opportunity to take a picture.

"Princie's here; that's the hat and coat which he wouldn't part with for quids," said the butler, showing us a silk hat and an overcoat well worn inside the collar.

We set up our stands at the end of the room and began playing. The Prince of Wales was first on the floor with his hostess. The party soon warmed up, and after an hour Jack suggested taking a

photograph. The fast plates and super lenses which now make flash-powder unnecessary were not yet invented.

During the first interval the Prince came across to Jack, and we were all introduced separately.

"Meet Percy Brown, native son of California; he wants to take a picture, a souvenir to send back to the boys who fought with you in France," said Jack.

There was a slight flicker of recognition in his eyes as the Prince shook hands with me. He hoped we liked London. He fingered some of the instruments and tried a roll on the side drum. Now was my chance, so I asked him if he minded being photographed with the boys. He agreed readily, so I fetched my camera. As I was unfolding it and setting the flash-lamp, the host called me to have another glass of champagne. Was I enjoying myself? Were the staff looking after us? Nice friendly talk. As we finished our wine he turned as if to go back to the guests. His parting remark was:

"Well, have a good time, old man. I know I can trust Percy Brown of the *Daily Graphic* to play the game, and not make the Prince of Wales look a bloody fool."

He said it with such a sweet smile, too. I was rumbled. I don't remember folding my camera and tripod. To fade away was my only desire now. The band began to play again. Jack was getting anxious about the picture, for the Prince took the floor again. I had to explain the position. I was on my way out when the host returned.

"Here, Percy Brown. Where are you going? Don't be so touchy. You are my guest, so stay and enjoy yourself like everyone else."

Here was a sportsman indeed, and you have seen his name several times in the headlines. Jack Howard understood the position, and agreed that the proposed friendly picture might get into unfriendly hands and offend the Royal Family. It was a wonderful party given by a hero-to-be for deeds done in unusual spheres.

When I handed my pictures to the art-editor, who was also fiction editor, he pointed to a pile of manuscripts. He had read the lot, he said, and not one of the dozen serials was fit to print. He needed one for the following Sunday to print for Monday, as the current story ended on Saturday. I knew a chap who could



write him one, I said. He told me to fetch my friend to the office quickly.

Instead, during the day I sketched out a long instalment with the Italian roof-garden as a background. I designed a super enterprise in ballrooms in a woodland setting, twittering birds, cascading waters and real grass banks. The sky could be seen with daylight effects or moonlight with stars like jewels. The characters almost appeared themselves, and soon they had started to live in a mystery and intrigue which looked like a lively first instalment. I wrote the stuff during three different assignments—while waiting for the bride and bridegroom at St. Martin's, on the way to cover a railway accident, and during an afternoon job at the Savoy Hotel.

The public think that because you work on a newspaper you get favoured treatment. You don't. Any outsider stands a much better chance of getting feature and serial stories published. Wealthy amateurs sometimes sign their names to stories done by their secretaries and publicity experts. Then doctors, lawyers, officers walk away with hundreds of pounds for doing the easiest job on the paper. So I thought it time a camera-man had a turn.

I had often wanted to write a serial, not only for the money, but also because serial writers seemed to be treated as a class apart. Some of them are pampered like prima donnas and are dined and wined by the editors and directors. There is also the question of prejudice. A fiction editor would not think of publishing a serial by a sports writer, no matter how good the story. They work on the lines that newspapers are produced by specialists. A caption-writer can do nothing but write captions, so they think. An outside serial-writer gets a big build-up, but the staff man is just one of the family.

Here I saw a faint chance of getting a story in the paper. After laboriously typing the notes I handed in the result to the fiction editor under the title of "Cleansing Fires". He jumped at it. I was to tell the author to send in more instalments at once. By next day he had the two-page instalment in proof. He wanted the name of the author. What should I do? For the moment I was caught on the wrong leg. Should I give myself a fancy name and act as agent for myself, or plank my own frankly on the table? This might "spike" it at once. I jockeyed for time. In the late afternoon I wrote my correct name on the

manuscript in very tiny letters. Then I got right out of the office. The fiction editor took it fairly well after his first bout of annoyance, and said he would print the story under a non-de-plume. Then it struck me that it was a pity that in some offices Press-photography is regarded as the lowest form of journalism. The thought made me resist in spite of the menace of the "spike".

The directors would not agree to printing a Press-photographer's name over the "Thrilling New Serial". Well, they would this time! I thought of the abundance of publicity attached to a serial writer. Your name is read by millions, not thousands, for the story is well advertised. It is like printing the name of the star turn on a huge hoarding, while the rest of the twenty turns get their names in the small lettering. All or nothing, I thought, so I gambled.

As the fiction editor dare not print the correct name, I went down to the directors' quarters and saw Mr. Will. He was always reasonable, but said it was impossible unless Sir William Berry, now Lord Camrose, would agree. There was a long discussion on the phone, but at last we won our point. They swallowed the pill and did me proud.

But what a time I had getting the next instalments ready! My camera jobs in all sorts of places gave me plenty of plot, characters and background. The fiction editor did not like my title, so changed it to "Mystery of the Masked Dancer".

An old friend, Miss Martin, corrected my stuff after I got a few instalments ahead. If I had a picture to take and the pubs were closed, I would slip into a church and knock off a few hundred words. Vergers often thought I was one of the devout called to unload my sins.

Seeing my name in the advertisements of the serial, several Court photographers, like Vandyk, invited me for free sittings, which I worked in between jobs, but only after carefully parking my camera in the nearest cloakroom. It was like leading a double life.

I was my own boss for once, for I could order about these characters of my dream-world. At last I had a team working for me, and it is wonderful how easily they worked without effort from me. I only had to shut my eyes, and the play was on. The whole thing moved like a colourful film, and the slightest change of expression came out clearly. In fact, the plot often ran away

with me. Then I did not know just how much to choose, especially when the instalments began to be printed shorter as we approached the final chapter.

Then I would shut my eyes once more and, to condense the action, make them do it all over again. I got a curious thrill planning situations for the heroine and hero, whom I alone knew. No one could interfere with me now. No one even knew what I was thinking. This concentration cost me a severe shaking one day coming from Downing Street. I had covered the job automatically, photographing the Cabinet obediently walking into the street. As I was leaving I walked straight into a car, and the mudguard flung me across the pavement. The language of the driver and two policemen easily blotted out my dream-world conversations. I jumped into the first taxi and hurried to the office to fix the words of the day's adventures for another instalment.

That was the difficult job, trying to remember the action and the conversation. Every instalment had to have a curtain, to leave the readers hungry for next day's adventures. As I wrote the stuff it seemed as if I was bringing into being real people in a real world. As I planned the backgrounds I felt like a builder who builds a new town street by street. In fact, at night I lived in this new world of mine and walked about in it. The detail became startlingly clear, even to the dress and decoration.

The clothes of the leading characters caused me some trouble. I watched society on different jobs, and managed to dress them without making any big mistakes. Men don't notice these things, but women won't read a tale with old-fashioned clothes in it. I found this out by listening to them on the buses and trams.

The most satisfying feature about this fresh effort was that my tale and characters were guaranteed a daily show in the *Daily Graphic* as long as I could keep them alive and interesting. No hawking of this story from firm to firm until the manuscript was in tatters. In fact, the public, having paid their penny, waited for the daily performance, for that is how the opening of the rustling pages of the *Daily Graphic* sounded to me—the raising of a stage curtain. Only the women went straight to my tale on the inside back page. My most loyal readers were the four office-boys, who tried to forecast next day's instalment in loud voices outside the editor's door.

Five weeks passed. The story was still my daily problem. It was extraordinary how ambitious the characters became. They wanted titles. But Miss Martin curbed me in this, for she said readers wanted straightforward stories of people they imagined themselves to be. Truth and decency must always win out, she said. So I put them into some new adventures, such as the great fire-scene rescues.

One morning the editor hinted that he had another good serial ready. How long would it be before my last instalment was turned in? I hung it out for another month. All went well, and except for the loss of one instalment, which was not missed, no complaints were made. The hero and heroine settled down to happy married life with plenty of money, and so there I left them until I needed them again.

When the cheque arrived I felt like a millionaire, made for life. Serial-writing was more profitable than writing books. That fat cheque started me buying a house, a motor-car and several other responsibilities. My mother was having the time of her life, with not a cloud in our sky.

Then I planned another story, "Golden Wedding Mystery". I knew the game now, I thought, so took a lot of trouble over the second effort. Foreign jobs interrupted it, but I got it ready just in time for the closing down of the dear old *Daily Graphic*. No paper to put it in! What a shock we all had, so sudden was the blow. To me the death of a newspaper seemed more tragic than the death of a human being.

We arrived at Tallis House to find a crowd about the building. It looked as if someone had been killed by a car and the crowd gathered to pick up the body. White-bearded old men were chatting sadly in groups. When I asked them what had happened, they looked at me like one who had not heard that the world had come to an end. But it had—their world, the only one they had known all their lives. And the old building had become my home too. Old Bill Rowe, the doorman, the oldest member of the firm, was in tears. So thickly was he speaking I could not understand him. Compositors, machinists and cleaners could not grasp the fact that their jobs were gone.

I went up to the third floor, where the photographers were playing table tennis. There was no sorrow here. I played a couple of sets, and then heard the story. The *Daily Graphic* was to be merged into the *Daily Sketch*. A few would go on to Gray's

Inn Road, and the rest be fired. We all received notice to quit, but were privately given the tip to hang on at full pay until we went over to the new firm. The photographers were all right, but the rest were not—at least, none but the exclusive few.

The death of the *Daily Graphic* was a Fleet Street tragedy. A shiver of apprehension went through the other offices. The saddest sight of all was to see those dear old-timers with their world knocked from under them. Every morning they continued to come to the office as if they could not believe the news and that perhaps the old firm would reopen as usual.

For us there was nothing to do but become very hot at ping-pong, darts and shove-ha'penny. Occasionally we took a picture. I made one group photo which was to bring the firm a large sum of money. Sir Alfred Mond, afterwards Lord Melchett, had brought off a colossal merger now known as Imperial Chemical Industries. As I lined up the large group I noticed several millionaires. My pictures were circulated in thousands all over the world. I nearly sold Sir Alfred my own process for low-temperature carbonisation, but more of this later. I lacked that extra bit of *nous*.

For months we played on full pay waiting to be taken over to the *Daily Sketch*. At last the big day came, and it is not surprising that we did not get a great reception. After all, it was their paper, and we were forced on them. Tom Noble was our new chief. He had rules—nothing difficult, but curious to us who had lived a care-free life on the old firm. We even had a captain, who acted as a sort of official interpreter between the staff and the chief. This was Billy Field, who, luckily for us, smoothed away the snags and the pin-pricks which inevitably arise when the owner decides to blend two staffs which had been handled in very different ways. We were soon all one very happy family without that imaginary knife-cut across the throat.

I missed direct contact with Mr Will, who was now in charge not only of the *Daily Sketch*, but also of Allied Newspapers. Still, everything came all right, for we now had the latest kind of dark rooms and the best photographic printers in London. They worked miracles with our fuzzy plates exposed during those dreadful foggy Saturday afternoons covering First League football matches. But we could never get off the "lead". We had always to keep in touch with the office. In fact, so up-to-date was the system that a special staff was trained for this and other

duties. Nothing could happen which did not automatically register in our office.

For special and delicate enquiries three ex-police inspectors were engaged. Then there were the "body-snatchers", another special section, whose job was to ferret out a portrait of a murderer in prison and out of range of our cameras. No crime story could slip past Tom Noble's highly trained team.

After one frank exchange of opinions I understood the new chief, and for several years he sent me on some grand roving commissions. He turned me free on the Continent to get scoops galore. There was no worry about expenses. The best hotel in any country was only just good enough for his photographers. He is the only chief who still gives his staff an annual banquet—the finest of food and wines—always at Frascati's after Ascot. Besides this, after every foreign job he took me to lunch—one of those unforgettable meals, all in, during which he thanked me for never letting him down. Now Mr. Will has retired Tom Noble is the last of the camera-man's friends.

When we got settled with the new firm I asked Mr. Will if he could use the new serial I had written for the *Daily Graphic*. Certainly, if I would let him have it at once. Unfortunately he went to Manchester, and I had to leave it in the care of his secretary. Somehow it was side-tracked into the Allied News fiction department. Still, I was all agog, enjoying the anticipation of having another long serial in print.

The fiction editor sent for me. I went to the top floor, expecting him to ask me how much I wanted for the new story. This is how you are put in your place by "Manchester".

"Is this your stuff?" he said, pointing to my bundle of "Golden Wedding Mystery".

"Yes," I said.

"The heroine has got no sense, no personality, the story has no plot and too much journalese," he said.

What a blow!

"Shall I rewrite it?" I asked, bewildered.

"No use to me in any form. Not worth looking at," he added, with dreadful finality in his voice.

Crash went my castle. While I was recovering from the shock in the Apple Tree I heard that Captain Rowe, Mr. Will's secretary, wanted to see me.

"Percy, I'm sorry to tell you that after reading your serial I

find that the heroine has no sense, no personality, the story has no plot and too much journalese," he said, as if saying a piece he had learnt off by heart.

"Shall I take it back and rewrite it?" I asked him.

"No use to me in any form. Not worth looking at," he said, with the same dreadful finality.

Crash went my castle for the second time. Funny why it took two of them to turn down my story in exactly the same words. Mr. Will was still up north, so I could do nothing about it. I made no more attempts at getting a serial in the *Daily Sketch*, for I could see I needed a higher technique to deal with the new complicated conditions. Too many people to please, so I put the bundle in my locker and forgot it.

Although I did not write regularly for the paper, my foreign interviews and descriptive articles were always given a good show under my own name and in good-sized type. Wherever I met a reporter on a job I never wrote a line, restricting myself to pictures after I left the *Daily Graphic*.

One morning, when I had got a good juicy interview with a king in the main page, I was greeted by a sub-editor named Albert Storey. He said I had written a corking interview. Why did I not do it regularly and chuck up the camera? After some more of his congratulations I began to think I was good, and pulled out the rejected serial. He read a few lines here and there and said it was grand stuff.

"Let me have it now, and I will meet you in Henneky's at six."

He was bubbling over with enthusiasm when I met him in the old wine tavern, the serial under his arm.

"This is the stuff they are looking for on the *Daily Sketch*—characters with plenty of personality, a plot full of action and mystery, and good fresh style devoid of journalese. The fiction editress will snatch this off you," he said.

It was nice to have another opinion. Should I tell him that my tale had already been turned down? No, I thought, let it have another run, as I had given a lot of time to it.

Two days later I received a note at my home address from the fiction editress saying that she liked my tale and offered three guineas a thousand words. Luckily I had had the presence of mind to rub the rust from under the clips and type a new first page to each section. I accepted quickly, and soon the first

instalment was in proof. We had dinner at Maison Dorée and clinched the deal.

Two days later I got another note from her which was like a cry against the Wailing Wall. Why had I not told her that I was a Press-photographer? It was too late now, for the story was partly in print. Here again came that hostile attitude to the camera-men. We seemed to be tolerated as a necessary evil to be kept isolated from the upper reaches of the newspaper world. Nor would I use a pen name. I wondered why the editor was so afraid of printing my name over a serial. Many a titled nit-wit has had his or her name printed over an article written by a "ghost". Snobbery, of course, but the day when the ordinary reader was impressed by that stuff is over. That was the mood I was in, but it soon passed, for again I thought that after all it was their newspaper, to run as they thought best.

It was no use my telling the editress that the *Daily Graphic* had printed my name over a serial. It must have been a mistake, she said. How right she was! However, there it was, my tale advertised in quarter pages in the *Sunday Times* and in all the Allied Newspapers. "Grand New Serial by Percy Brown." No one could stop it now, not even the editor.

My pals thought I must have a big pull in the office to get away with a £300 serial story. Only Albert Storey knew that it was a fluke. Later he was sent to Manchester for promotion. It was a coincidence that Captain Rowe was also sent to Manchester, from where he got himself into the world of gas, for he is now the secretary of several companies.

"Golden Wedding Mystery" ran its course after I had welded a few more instalments on to it, for I knew it would be my last in my own paper. In fact, I wrote no more serials, for matters would be worse if my name was seen in any other newspaper. To write serials was easy, but to sell them was the difficulty. I was certainly not going to abandon the camera, which had carried me into such a variety of experiences.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### PRINCE OF WALES AT LE TOUQUET

WHEN THERE WERE NO SERIOUS assignments I was turned on to the sporting and social side, like Cowes, Ascot, Epsom, Ranelagh, Hurlingham and Roehampton. Easy stuff, with no worry and an opportunity to wish our lives away. We were given hospitality unlimited, like the champagne lunches in the Ascot club tents. Often it was difficult to remain sober enough to get back to the office to develop the plates without being noticed. Cowes was a week of revelry and high living. Not for all of us, for many Press-photographers would not only refuse food, but also drinks.

My happiest hunting grounds were the French pleasure resorts, except when the Prince turned up on one of those quiet secret holidays of his. Then matters became a little complicated.

I was covering a dull season at Le Touquet. I could find only nonentities, no title higher than one or two "honourables", among the rich riff-raff which drifts about on the fringe of society trying to get into my pictures, if only on the edges. There was no one of any news or social value. I made a few pictures of pretty girls at tennis, golf and dancing, and was on the point of leaving when Jack Brook of Topical arrived at the hotel.

Jack was the man who climbed the Nelson Monument, chased by the steeple-jack who was clearing away the birds' nests on the cornice. A dull life in London sent him into the Black and Tans, where he could continue to get fighting close-ups, as he had done during the Great War. He was never sent on a roving commission, so I knew his presence meant that a royalty was expected. He thought I was on the same story, so we spent the day trying to make each other talk. I tried to pump him, but the more he drank the more reticent he became. As my editor knew where I was, I dare not leave. Not that royalty doing the social round meant much to the *Daily Sketch*, but royalty in a plane accident would be world news. Just as the light was fading in rushed the golf professional and shouted to Jack:

"Hurry up; his Nibs is here, on his way to play a round before dinner."

Jack let fly a terrible flow of language now the pro had given the game away, for "His Nibs" could only be the Prince of Wales—on another secret holiday. How I would have liked to leave him to enjoy it! But I dare not leave an agency man with the Prince, as he was then the main story of the day. Anything can happen to royalty. He hated being photographed only a little less than I hated photographing him. Shall we ever forget the Prince of Wales riding in public point-to-point races when he was more often off than on the horse? The law of averages would have killed him if he had continued.

"Don't photograph him on the ground. Wait till he gets up," became the cry of his retinue.

But we never knew when he would get up! Fleet Street breathed with relief when he gave up riding.

But this time it was golf.

"Come on, Perse; you did not come here by accident, so we'll do it together," said Jack, and off we went to the golf club.

Here was a crowd of people already sitting in massed gloom. If we had not known it, their mysterious looks and tight lips would have told us that an important personage had arrived. The secretary came towards us like a kitten mincing round a puddle and in a loud whisper asked us to play the game!

I suggested to Jack that we leave the crowd of mourners. We went out by the main entrance, turned among the trees, and by a pathway we arrived at the ninth hole, known as *La Petite Bonne Heure*, for here was a cosy little bar stocked up by a gardener with a wheelbarrow. We could see that no Frenchman pipped us, for the Prince was partial to foreigner photographers. It was too late to take good pictures, anyway, so we waited in the bar, Jack fuming between double Scotches.

Half an hour later the Prince and Major Piers Legh played round to the ninth hole. We kept out of sight. But as they came past the bar the Prince saw us and started to create. I took it all sweetly until one of his remarks nettled me.

"... following me out here. Can't I have a moment to myself? Damn the photographs! Why don't you play the game?" he was saying, his equerry standing by.

"You tell me to play the game! Aren't we doing it? Look at our cameras, still in the cases. I had no idea you were coming to Le Touquet. I might say that you have followed *me*," I said, while the Prince looked surprised, but listened.

"You tell me to play the game. I do. You can clear up all this misunderstanding by telling our bosses, officially through the Newspaper Proprietors' Association, that you don't want to be photographed. No camera-man would ever trouble you after that."

H.R.H. listened carefully and was interested. Some crawling, trouble-making little secretary had probably dropped the poison to one of the entourage.

As the Prince seemed ready to listen, I continued:

"Do you remember playing the drums at the supper-party in Mayfair, and do you remember me as a native son of California just for the night in order to snap you with the band?"

"Yes, of course; and I wondered why you did not take the picture," said the Prince, with a half-smile.

"Because your very charming host said he knew I would play the game and not make the Prince of Wales look a bloody fool in the *Daily Graphic*," I said.

The Prince took all this very well, and laughed at the last remark. Major Piers Legh did not attempt to end the interview. Then out comes that charming sunny side of H.R.H. No one can be more friendly and reasonable when you make direct contact with him.

"Yes, of course, I see your difficulties," said the Prince, with that charming smile, caught only once, and in America. "Your editors want the photographs, and they probably won't listen to excuses. Really I did not want any publicity on this short holiday, shall we say for reasons of State? Anyhow, come to the hotel tomorrow when the light is better for all of us, and you shall have your pictures."

"No, Sir; your reasons of State are enough for us. Eh, Jack? We shall not bother you at all. We hope the Frenchmen do not get any pictures, for that is the only reason we are waiting here. We look foolish when an editor hints that the foreigners are smarter at getting pictures to be used against us," I said.

Although the Prince still lingered with Major Piers Legh, not missing a word of the conversation, I suggested that he continue his game undisturbed while he could still see the ball.

"Thanks. I will. Now I understand your problems we'll see if we can make matters a little less complicated," he added, smiling and friendly. He shook hands with both of us and departed in the gloom with his equerry.

Jack and I agreed to call it a day and to leave H.R.H. entirely alone on his holiday.

"You don't want anything better than that. I wonder who the hell makes all the trouble," said Jack as he drank off his half-finished Scotch.

We returned to the hotel, dressed for dinner, read the papers, drank some cocktails and went to our table. As guests of the management, we did very well. Continental hoteliers entertain lavishly for free publicity.

Half-way through the meal Paul Poret's bevy of ravishing mannequins appeared. They came whirling between the tables, showing off their wonderful frocks, hats and legs, bewitching us all as we paused over the meal. At the same time—almost among them, it seemed—came a party of five: the Prince of Wales and his suite.

The beauty show held the party until the soup was served. As the Prince was sipping his first drink, he noticed us and smiled. There was not the slightest resentment in his face. He said something to General Trotter, his equerry, who did not see the joke. We simply had to raise our glasses to him, and he responded graciously.

"Let's leave them to it," said Jack.

We watched the finish of the beauty parade and withdrew to the balcony outside. We ordered cognacs and coffee. We felt like a couple of millionaires sipping our coffee, when the Prince and his party came and sat next to us. Jack suggested again moving out of the royal sphere, so we sauntered over to the casino across the road in the lovely pines.

Enjoying himself thoroughly was Gordon Selfridge. When we had done our day pictures we never worked in the evening, so were without our cameras. At the other end of the table were some of the lowest of the rich, crooks and thugs, with faces like criss-cross radiators—an Ascot mixture.

A little excitement at the door made me turn in time to see the Prince and his friends being ushered in by officials bursting themselves in welcome. They surely would not come near to where we were standing, so we remained with our backs towards them, affecting a deep interest in the play. Over they came, and two chairs were given them opposite the great shopkeeper. We moved back and watched the scene like everyone else. The Prince was having a flutter, and lost a packet quickly, for he

came in with two coat pockets stuffed with notes. He said his equerry brought him bad luck, so invited Major Piers Legh to change places with Trotter. As the General got up he caught sight of me and came over trembling with anger.

"So you are the man who photographed the Prince and dared to talk to him on the golf-course today, you are the man who dared to interrupt his holiday by taking pictures," he said furiously.

Well, I thought this a bit thick, picking on me to vent his bad temper, especially as we had taken no pictures, and did not intend to. I said a little piece.

"You'll pardon me, General. I did not take a picture on the golf-course, nor did I take that one a few seconds ago of all of you together," I said, with a sweeping wave of the hand to include all the riff-raff sitting among some of Mayfair's social successes.

"My God, I noticed something! Show me the man who did it. I'll take the plates off him," said the General, spluttering.

"As I was saying," I continued, "I did not take pictures this afternoon, nor did I take that one this evening."

Trotter looked at the mixed crowd in the Casino and added: "My God! that picture must not be published."

"You worry too much, General. We are off duty for the duration. The Prince of Wales knows that we have not photographed him, nor are we going to do so tomorrow. He shall be immune from any of our attentions unless we have to snap him at a public function, and that he would understand," were my last words, but the General insisted on being angry, so I left him thinking that a flashlight photo had really been taken which might get into the American newspapers. That was my mild reprisal for the petty worries he had caused. When he reads this he will know that the photo which worried him never happened.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### PRINCE OF WALES AT BIARRITZ

**I**N SPITE OF THE FRIENDLY understanding arrived at with the Prince of Wales, nothing went right for us when he attended a public function. No matter what invitations, permits and facilities were issued to the Press, there was always a misinterpretation of orders. At home or abroad, equerries, police and local officials plunged into panic at his approach and made the Prince of Wales our most difficult subject.

Yet how different was the atmosphere when we photographed Queen Mary and King George the Fifth, our best subjects, with the rest of the royal family! The perfect bodyguard was Mr. Spencer, a tactful liaison between their majesties and the Press. So good was he at his job that he knew exactly when and where the best picture could be taken. He used to tell us that we could assemble in the nearest pub or café until the time and place for the picture were selected. He has even let off the flash for us—well behind us, in order not to scare her majesty. When he retired the camera-men wanted to make him a present.

After Spencer retired, the King and Queen sometimes had to send an equerry across to us to ask if the Press arrangements were satisfactory, after noting that such was not the case. This happened at St. Pancras. The railway police had driven us back fifty yards from the red carpet. No use pretending to take a picture, so we stood in a line with hats off as spectators, our closed camera cases laid ostentatiously in front of us like a kit inspection.

"Where are the photographers?" asked her majesty, looking round.

I slipped past the police and explained. The Queen told us to come forward, and herself posed the group. In seconds the job was done, the camera-men away to their offices with a fine picture of Queen Mary and King George smiling good-naturedly.

Think of all the happy pictures of their majesties, and then compare them with the poor stuff printed of the Prince of Wales, who, probably badly advised, when he saw a man trying to get a picture, would hide his face behind his hat, hand, or hand-

kerchief. His bodyguards stood in front of cameras. When the plates were developed the picture showed big backs and half an inch of the Prince.

How I used to try to side-step a Prince of Wales assignment! I enjoy going to sea with the Fleet, especially in big ships. In spite of the fact that I was handed a bundle of permits and invitations, I tried all I knew to dodge going with the Prince of Wales to cover the Mediterranean Naval Manœuvres and Review. Even on the sea the entourage might think up some irritating hazards to make hard work of a pleasant job. I prayed for a miracle to divert me from the job.

And it happened! A revolution in glorious, hospitable Spain. When I read the news at the Gare du Nord I called at our Paris office to phone the chief, asking if I could leave the Prince of Wales to the agencies and cover the revolution instead.

"Certainly, go to it," came back the answer.

What a relief, in spite of the reserved cabins, evening dress every night in the mess, with its limited menus and rigid formalities during ceremonial occasions. The presence of the Prince might make even a trip with the Navy hard work. And then those comic consuls in their fancy dress assuming authority over us and bustling about to make a show. . . .

If only I could get to Madrid in time to find a bit of revolution to photograph—so difficult to find, though you may be right in it—I would be safe from authority for months in that wonderful climate.

Unfortunately when I reached Madrid this time the rebels had been shot. Everywhere was peaceful and normal. But there is always plenty to do in Spain when you meet Pierre Luck, Movie-tone operator. Away we went down to Seville in his sound-truck, for it was Holy Week, when the finest bull-fights take place.

We were still in Seville when our great aircraft-carrier, H.M.S. *Glorious*, drove full speed into a French liner off her course, killing thirty and injuring many others. The carrier was manœuvring to take on a score of airplanes. Pierre always brought me luck. What a terrible but wonderful picture: the liner showing the tremendous gash in her side, almost cut in two, her crew still getting out the dead above the water-line, divers working in the black depths below, patching up the hull. Bodies lay on the dock-side in boxes to be taken to the cemetery and thrust into the holes in the high wall of rotting chambers, and plastered up until

the flesh dissolved. The bones are then flung into a common grave.

In order to keep the liner afloat, *Glorious* put on full steam and carried her on her bows into Malaga Harbour. On the way down there we were shot at, but not by the rebels. To get to Malaga in time, Pierre drove all night non-stop over the mountains. At dawn we were rushing through orange groves.

Luscious-looking fruit on either side was too much for Pierre, so he pulled up for breakfast. We crossed the wide ditch and began filling our pockets, Pierre up a tree after the sweet fruit nearest the sun. I happened to look round. About fifty yards away under the trees a guard with a gun was creeping towards us. I shouted as I dived into the ditch. The gun crashed out a whirl of pellets. Pierre was first out, and away we drove to the plains below. Twenty kilometres were judged sufficient safety margin, so we stopped to breakfast on the stolen fruit. Pierre started eating. His face shrivelled up, as if he had tasted the essence of vinegar. Those oranges, obviously destined for the making of marmalade, were the bitterest fruit I have ever tasted. We left the lot on the grass and went on to the job.

After the Malaga story Pierre thought of others. Lourdes was one. I was against going there, for it meant leaving Spain, and no one knew what might happen at any moment. Besides, it was two days' journey just for a pilgrimage. Pierre thought of some more good reasons why I should go with him. Big business men ruined by the slump were on their way to Lourdes to crawl on their hands and knees up the Calvary mountain to pray at the foot of the huge cross for a better time! All this without a flicker of a smile. I fell for this and his detailed descriptions of Lourdes, the churches and the devout crowds.

I had seen enough on the battle-fields of the Great War. At Lourdes the scenes were worse. What faith those patient incurables showed as they lay writhing in constant pain, laid out in rows of hundreds in the sweltering heat. And what kindness could be seen—thousands of strong young people giving up their holidays to nurse the poor creatures so cursed by terrible diseases. Sometimes the stench was worse than death.

The sight of all that suffering would give pause to the most callous of us. It is so easy to criticise and condemn things we don't understand. But there must be something in it, judging by the hundreds of discarded crutches. As the sufferers were



brought near the Holy Grotto you could see their faces light up with a devout faith. I am sure for those few minutes they suffered no pain. This was the moment they had prayed for.

We made a special feature of the penitent financiers climbing Calvary on their hands and knees, kissing the earth at intervals. Then Pierre found a job to take us to Pau to eat duck roasted in wine and oranges, and served with bottles of Clos Vougeot in a succulent sauce in his namesake's restaurant. We were planning other journeys through more good restaurants when the blow fell.

The boss told me by phone to go to Biarritz and wait for the Prince of Wales, who had finished his visit to the Fleet and was now going to take a quiet holiday! I swore. It was like being sent back to cover the social round. We had a farewell binge, and I departed, wondering why the Prince had chosen Biarritz for a quiet holiday.

I had a long wait, during which I crossed the Spanish frontier to meet old friends and see a few bull-fights. I made friends with everyone likely to come in contact with the royal visitor and his entourage. Everywhere I went I heard the news that the Prince was coming on a secret holiday. The hotel proprietors rubbed their hands in anticipation of the revival of the glories of their town. Some of the old men talked about the great King Edward the Seventh.

I heard news of the coming royal visit so often it sounded like a rumour started to divert attention while the Prince had a real holiday undisturbed.

I was deep in a deck chair on the sands in front of the casino chatting to Tasco, a colleague camera-man. Although keen competitors, we were trying to arrange things so that we could be friends at meal-times. Everyone knew that the Prince of Wales was coming, such a mystery had the officials made of the royal visit. I told Tasco, as I told the foreign photographers, that the royal party were to be guarded by specially picked police who had instructions to shoot at sight anyone near the villa grounds at Chiberta. The Frenchmen swallowed the story and sheered off back to Paris. Tasco was too old a bird to be scared off. Besides, he was there to snap other personalities. There were plenty of small people of no use to me tumbling over each other to get into print. If I covered them they would be no use to Tasco.

The Prince of Wales arrived by plane. As there were no other

camera-men in Biarritz, we decided to lay off the Prince until a suitable opportunity occurred to take a picture.

Next morning, just to keep an eye on things, I was drinking coffee at the café opposite the Hotel Hermitage, where the Prince of Wales and Prince George were staying until Lawson Johnston's villa was ready for them. Suddenly a big car drove to the hotel carrying a photographer and a pile of paraphernalia. I grabbed my camera, opening it as I dashed through the gate. General Trotter stepped in front of me, but this was too serious. I did a rigger feint and side-stepped him and reached the gardens, where I found the Princes ready to be photographed by a Frenchman. Mark you, this was after the Press had been told that no pictures would be taken during the royal holiday. What a chump I would have looked with the Frenchman's photo published in my own paper! While the local man was setting up his camera I took half a dozen live unposed pictures.

"Here, what's this?" called out the Prince of Wales.

"Just the same old story. Sent all the way from London, we try to keep from photographing you, and then, as usual, you pose for the foreigner who flies his picture to London to be used against us," I said bluntly.

"But there is a special reason for this man being here," said Prince George, with his disarming charm.

"I see no special reason why foreign photographers should get a scoop against us," I said. "So much did I want to avoid photographing you, that although I was sent to cover your visit to the Mediterranean Fleet, I phoned the office to be excused from troubling you, so that I could cover the rising in Spain."

"So you would rather photograph a revolution?" said the Prince, with just a touch of anxiety in his voice.

"Yes, certainly, for wherever you are, for some queer reason the officials seem to go into a flat spin and make a dive for the camera-men. Then the police think they have the right to push us all over the place. They spoil a nice job like this and make it a waste of time and money," I replied.

I spoke bluntly, so that the Prince would tell our editors he did not want to be photographed. That would avoid the continual misunderstandings.

Anyway, this time we got together again. When you can speak directly to any member of our royal family they listen

attentively. The entourage hated us for it, and had destroyed any good impression by the time we next met H.R.H.

This time I made a suggestion.

"You are starting a three weeks holiday. I have a picture of the beginning. May I photograph the end of the holiday?"

"That's a sporting arrangement which I will accept. See me at Chiberta before we leave for home," said the Prince of Wales, shaking hands in the friendliest manner.

I left them in the best of spirits with a definite arrangement made. The special permit for the Frenchman's pictures was given after he had chased the Princes into the Café de Paris to blow off a terrific flashlight. The usual row followed, during which the Prince of Wales demanded the plate. The Frenchman said he was in a free country, and refused to hand it over. The Prince coaxed him with the offer of a special pose next morning. The Frenchman accepted, and the plate was ceremoniously destroyed. While this was going on I was in the Casino trying to make my expenses.

Tasco heard about the row and assigned to me the royal sphere to exploit exclusively. He had to provide pictures for three weeklies on time, and could not wait for the royal whim. We worked in the mornings, and in the afternoons went miles away from the class end of the town to Biarritz's bourgeois beach. I took my colleague sea-bathing for the first time in his life, and nearly lost him in the terrific back-wash which sucked him away. It was some time before I could find him and drag him up the beach. He came to after a few minutes, more scared than ever of the sea. I took no more pictures, but helped Tasco to take plenty of society and fashion stuff. When he had got all he wanted we had a good farewell party, and after the Press-photographer's toast, "Here's damnation to all our obstructors, the twerps, numphs, pooms and snurges", he left for London.

The Princes were now quite friendly. Not once did they see me with a camera. They nodded matey-like whenever they happened to come my way, for I never went theirs. I was in the Café de Paris when they came in with a large party given by a multi-millionaire. Just an "Ah, there's Brown doing himself well," as they passed on to their table. Here were all the ingredients for a good holiday, for the Princes to enjoy to the full. They went undisturbed on their way to their golf, the swimming-pool, the beaches, and all would have gone according to plan had not the entourage decided otherwise.

During their last week I explained to General Trotter my pact with the Princes. What right had I to make a pact? Had he not told me before about talking to the Princes? A nasty look came over his face. He would see about my pact. Then I began to wonder if anything might happen to prevent my getting the final picture.

Ever on the alert, the bodyguard could not understand my keeping away from the Princes. There was nothing for him to do, for I showed no signs of wanting anything. What was still more curious to him was that I did not have my camera with me.

As the end of the royal visit came nearer the detectives gave me very special attention. I did the correct thing. Again I approached Trotter. That nasty look came over his face again. He ordered me to keep away from the Princes. I explained that they had invited me to see them at the villa. He would see that I got no pictures, and went off in a fury.

This intense hostility to camera-men can now be explained. I don't blame Trotter. We all suffer from some phobia or another. Mine is fear of confined spaces. Some have a loathing for cats. Royal entourages suffer from cameraphobia. The sight of a camera sets up vibrations which make them quiver with rage and their speech incoherent. The sight of the General in a rage sets off the rest of the entourage vibrating. Then they affect everybody around them, sometimes even the crowd. Then you have a mass phobia against some innocent camera-man just trying to get a picture. The sad and devastating result of this cameraphobia is that it has ruined many a good photograph which posterity would have been glad of.

I tried Major Butler, Prince George's equerry. He had been very friendly and helpful after I snapped him at the swimming-pool with a group of friends. He was published looking his best, and thanked me for some prints. But now even he had been got at, for when I went to the villa he sent out a message to say he was not in. Yet he had told me in the morning to meet him. He had seen Trotter in the meantime. Time was now getting short. I wrote him a note to say that as that day was the last opportunity, I must begin taking pictures of Prince George, as he would be the first to leave.

Imagine having no pictures ready for the plane brought over by the firm's finest pilot! You may wonder why all this money and time are spent to get a few exclusive pictures. So do I some-

times. But these happen to be what the public wants, or at least the editors think the public wants them. How sick of the social round are camera-men, who hope that this side of their work will never be revived after this war. Certainly this dose of futile, childish bickering decided me to pack up this side of the game. If I had much more to do with them I might get like them, I thought.

It now seemed that my pact with the Princes was not worth even a scrap of paper and looked like being completely sabotaged by the entourage. Just their little game, for want of something better to do. Well, at the moment Press-photography was my job, and, whatever happened, those pictures had to be got on to the front page of the *Daily Sketch*.

I set to work without compunction, using the same methods we used to take murderers, blackmailers and all other crooks who make news. But I hated to have to work like a termite while covering the royal family. I soon had a grand bag of pictures in case the pact went west.

No one has such a poor photographic Press as the Prince of Wales, caused chiefly by interfering followers. I can still see the bodyguard, policemen in fancy dress, semi-valets, door-openers and dog-minders, mincing about the Prince, only at ease when they saw me wearing my black hat and black suit a quarter of a mile from him. Actually while they were "guarding" the Prince I was never more than four yards away, and moving with the party, yet invisible. Once I was a yard and a half from the Prince getting first-class candid camera pictures, while the bodyguard watched me half a mile away in the lovely pines near the lake, or thought they did.

I knew the hour when the Princes' party went sun-bathing at the *piscine*. From the cliffs I watched the Princes settling down, and when every eye was on the party revelling in the sun like a kindle of kittens, I slipped down to the shore and exposed half a dozen plates on Prince George and his friends, a matter of seconds. I was not quick enough to escape a little round man who rushed up and ordered me not to take any pictures of the royal party. I had to tell this little multi-millionaire to mind his own business—a big job, for it is still the largest of its kind in the world. His name is mentioned by everyone at least once a day in towns of five thousand and more population. My parting shot was:

"And if I hear any more from you I won't buy any more of your goods."

While watching all the rich playing with their millions, I thought it a pity that the same currency made by industry should be squandered in foreign resorts. I saw fortunes squandered in an evening. Entertaining and keeping foreign riff-raff make us look like real suckers abroad. Still, I am no reformer, for very early on I decided that I could not alter a world already made for me to enjoy. Life is too fleeting to be miserable.

I put my plates on the plane, cabled the office, and returned to the hotel to wait for the storm. Quite accidentally I ran into Trotter, now hissing with rage. If he heard of me even approaching the Princes, never mind speaking to them . . . I suppose the funny noises meant sudden death.

Half an hour later, while the bodyguard again watched me away by the lake-side among the pinewoods, I was again photographing the Prince of Wales at three yards range, eating and drinking just as you or I might do. A few minutes later I was exposing more plates on him laughing, patting his dog (the only one who saw me, by the way), right under the noses of the sleuths still watching me in the pines. I took half a dozen good golfing shots. One of the best showed the bodyguard with his broad beam sitting on a shooting-stick, looming up ten times as large as the Prince he was guarding.

When I first picked up a camera I learnt to become invisible and be in two places at once. I won't give away the secret, for my colleagues may still want to use the technique in desperate cases. Why certain officials should take it on themselves to make hard work of an odd job like mine was beyond me!

Bodyguards? What's their use, anyway? Our royal family's best protection is their own decent nature and attitude to their subjects. Besides, they are in no danger. If they were, the bodyguards would be harassing pressmen while the assassin did his deed, as was the case when King Alexander was assassinated at Marseilles. He had a multitude of bodyguards and satellites, but he was an easy mark. Look down the list of assassinations, and you will find that the bodyguards are never where they are needed. The modern variety are mere irritants. They feel they have to make a show of doing something for their keep, so they "protect" their charge against camera-men.

A use is found for some of them as lackeys to carry coats, open

and shut doors and take the dog to pay his visits. What a career for our well-trained detectives! Think of what it costs to give them their careers, and then they are used as odd-job men. There is plenty of scope for them in the sphere they are trained for. I know of one bodyguard, one who gave dignity to the curious job, who requested Queen Mary to release him. He wanted to go back to the uniform and the responsible duty of administering, with all its problems, a Kensington police station. King George discussed the matter fully with him, and agreed to release him. He went back to Kensington and his chosen career—a man's job, as he put it. This particular "attendant" looked like an affluent guest and made his job a very useful one. He smoothed away snags and delays in functions, which he managed like an efficient pageant master. First thing he did when he brought King George and Queen Mary to a ceremony was to point out to us where their majesties would pass the cheering children and which door of the church they would enter. He saw we had our pictures quickly. Next he would arrange a position for reporters—if they had been forgotten, as they often were—where they could see and hear the ceremony. He was a friend of ours, and we missed him badly.

That is how you feel after contact with our natural enemies, but the feeling soon passes, and we meet them in the morning hoping that overnight they have learnt sense.

Listen to what happened next morning at the swimming-pool! I went along to see what new climbers had arrived, and was watching what seemed at the distance like two huge performing seals—a well-known bookmaker and his wife. To the surprise of all around me, Prince George and his friend came up to me, all charm and smiles.

"I hear you snapped us yesterday," he said brightly.

"Yes. I hope they come out well, for I want some copies," added his friend.

I enjoyed the multi-millionaire's look of amazement. But how sorry I was, knowing that Queen Mary preferred to have her sons photographed with their clothes on. Some weeks later the Prince told my editor at a banquet that his mother had chided him for being photographed in bathing costume at Biarritz.

I explained what had happened, and offered to ask the art editor to throw out the bathing pictures, which I could replace with a fresh batch of action pictures.

"Yes, come along and take some more—now if you like," he

said in his charming, boyish way. He had a lovely nature! I took several shots, and everyone was happy.

On top of all appeared the Brighton Corporation, paying a visit to the Biarritz Corporation—a sharp contrast to the rest of those present—in dark clothes; serious, middle-aged men looking like undertakers.

“Certainly, ask them to join us,” said the Prince, when I inquired if I could make a comprehensive group, including the new arrivals.

The Prince and his friends shaped up ready for a picture and to receive the newcomers. I hurried to the other side of the swimming-pool. Certainly they would come and be snapped with the Prince. Then, would you believe it, a man popped up from nowhere, and, quickly whispering among the councillors, held up the party and called back those members already nearing the royal group.

“Pardon me, please don’t spoil this picture now everyone has agreed. This is a chance in a life-time, and does no one any harm, besides perhaps doing a lot of good,” I said anxiously.

“You must not take it,” commanded the stranger.

You could never guess who it was. The British Consul from Bayonne! That was his dirty deed for that day. What would the Brighton Corporation give for that picture today, in the light of the recent tragedy? This obstructor would not even let the Mayor of Biarritz be snapped with the Prince’s party. For one wild moment, as the picture dissolved before my eyes, I felt like pushing him into the deep end of the pool.

I returned to the Prince, who was wondering what was happening, and told him that the British Consul had queered the picture. Still he waited with the rest of the party as they watched the British Consul shepherd away his flock.

However, I was lucky, and had plenty of pictures. I did not trouble Prince George again, although there was no lack of opportunities as he drove to the aerodrome. We parted the best of friends, in spite of those who tried to come between us. There was no competition, so I stayed on at the aerodrome only in case of accidents. When the plane vanished as a speck in the clouds I went back to the hotel.

Now was to come the worst part of my job. I had already covered myself in case the opposition beat me, but a permitted picture according to the pact would be better than the stolen



shots. The editor was expecting the rest of the "Exclusive photographs posed by our own staff photographer", as a wind-up splash of the royal holiday. But how to do it? I went to see the secretary, who, until now, had been most charming and helpful. I got another shock.

"You will get no pictures of the Prince of Wales at this club," was his very abrupt answer.

He would know very soon that I had taken a bag full of pictures from right inside the precious club-house, while disguised as a chest of drawers. Some one had been at it again. Wherever I turned I met massed glaring. I left the palatial club-house and made a show of thanking the secretary in the hearing of the circle standing about like wax-works.

"Thanks very much for all you have done. I quite understand. No use waiting any longer, so I'll say good-bye," I said, making an ostentatious exit to show that I had given up all hopes of the promised picture of the Prince.

I suppose a twinge of sympathy plucked the club secretary's heart-strings when he thought of the times he had pleaded with us to help to fill the membership list by giving him free publicity. I walked away down the drive, trying to make my back view express hope abandoned. I paused for a drink in the chauffeurs' bar, cunningly camouflaged by bushes.

"Any luck, Buddy?" called out an American driver.

"No, nothing doing, so off I go," I replied, almost getting a break into my voice.

I boarded the old tram which cuts through the golf-course, and, in full view of the entourage, was jolted back to Biarritz. But I had got an idea. Although the chance of a permitted picture was becoming more remote, there was one possibility. My hope was Señor Hector F. Flynn, an Argentinian, host and golf partner to the Prince of Wales on his South American tour. He was the last to join the party, and knew nothing of the efforts of the equerries to prevent my getting pictures. Being a foreigner, he did not understand the snobbish, hostile attitude shown to us.

Next day, the last, Señor Flynn was to partner the Prince in the Prince of Wales Competition! I met Flynn at the hotel and suggested taking a souvenir photograph for him to take back to America. He would like it. And would arrange with the Prince for the time and place. I would be at hand half-way round the course, on the look-out for a signal. The chosen-spot was well

hidden from the club-house, and I knew that the Prince would take no spectators with him during play in his own competition.

I was out in the woods before the groundsmen were about, and waited in the bushes until the crowd began to gather round the first tee. Then the Prince and his partner drove off their first ball. The crowd was now shooed off the course. After a long wait a ball trickled on to the green near me, followed by another. I waited until the Prince arrived and turned his back, so that I could show myself. They finished the hole and crossed the road through the hedges. Just as he ducked his head, the Argentinian turned and caught my signal. After a few moments the Prince of Wales called out:

"Brown, hello. Come over here."

As I went through the hedge he came towards me and shook hands again, very matey like. He thanked me for playing the game with him! He said he had not seen my camera once since his first day in Biarritz. Thanks to everyone, including the Press, he had enjoyed his holiday to the full.

"Now you can have all the pictures you want, although I suppose I should not stop to pose for the Press during my own competition. What sort would you like?" inquired the Prince, now in his happiest mood.

I asked him to play freely and not to pose, to behave as if he was not expecting to be snapped. As he made his first swing at the ball he laughed, making a very fine picture.

"Oh no, don't send that one back home; take another one," he said.

I exposed eight plates on both of them. Both were surprised when, after two minutes of rapid firing, I got all I wanted.

"Be sure you have enough, for you have waited a long time for your chance," he said.

No camera-man can want anything better than that. I mentioned the fact that I had passed a message to him, as instructed on the first day. He had received none, and wondered why I had not come along earlier, for he was leaving almost at once. That entourage again! No wonder the Prince of Wales was misunderstood.

I reminded him of his competition. He laughed, shook hands just like an American, again thanking me for keeping to the pact. He went off just as another couple appeared in the distance. And to think that, owing to the stupidity and snobbishness of

petty officials, I had to break my word to cover my paper; for the editor wants pictures, not excuses.

I had been lucky. Again we finished on a friendly note in spite of the trouble-makers.

I dived back into the woods, and very shortly the plates were in the plane for England, to make a fine front-page splash in the *Daily Sketch*, my name mentioned as well. After two more days basking in the sun I got a wire from the office:

"You have done well. Come back and get ready for the Anglo-Danish Exhibition."

That decided me to pack up the job, for I knew that the Prince of Wales was going to open the exhibition. Can you imagine my feelings? Just as I am thinking that the Spanish revolution was about to flare up again I am asked to cover what should be at most useful commercial propaganda. What would the entourage do to my chances to get publicity pictures for both countries, which was what the exhibition was for?

The last photos I took in Biarritz were of that handsome commander airman who showed me how closely he could hop over hangers, practically scraping the roofs. He was the only airman to have a chauffeur-pilot-valet. If he continued these stunts, his life would be short. I sent plenty of pictures of him to be kept ready on the table for the inevitable fatal day.

He lasted longer than I thought, and killed himself and a skiing instructor at St. Moritz after an argument as to which was the most thrilling sport. Even a callous camera-man shed a tear at the funeral of the only son of two proud British aristocrats.

## CHAPTER NINE

### PRINCE OF WALES IN DENMARK AND SWEDEN

ALL CONCERNED WERE PLEASED with the pictures of the royal visit to Biarritz. In spite of intruders, we had finished up on a sweet note. So now was the time for me to finish altogether with royal assignments, unless the question of the authority of the entourage was cleared up. I feared that sooner or later there would be a scrap with one or other of that irritating retinue.

How futile it all seemed! My chief tried to laugh it off by saying that surely I was not going to let my royal dilemma get me down. He said that it was a national affair and would provide big propaganda opportunities not only for Scandinavian countries, but also for England. There were other matters too. The Princes had not yet chosen their brides. The tour would provide the finest record pictures of a royal tour.

So I fell for it again. I knew the world's best restaurants were in Stockholm and Copenhagen, where you can drink the choicest of wines. I discussed the scenery and life in general with my girl friend Perle and asked her to come with me.

We had a grand time on the journey, getting to Copenhagen a few days before the exhibition opened. Then the royal party arrived. One day all is peace and pleasure. The next it is police and being pushed about all over the place. There was no pretence of orderly routes through the exhibition, but just a solid advance-guard of police driving pressmen away from the royal guest. I selected a few vantage points out of the rough and tumble and carefully avoided the police. But he dropped on me at the English church as the Prince was leaving on the following Sunday, accompanied by the British Minister, minor officials, his own bodyguards and plenty of Danish police, already tipped off to give me special attention. I had hardly shown my face when up came a member of Scotland Yard and his friends to tell me in a wonderful flow what he thought of me, what he would do for making him look a bloody fool before the Yard, sitting on a shooting-stick. That was the picture which showed him many times bigger than the Prince, a tiny figure in the distance tickling the ball into the hole. I got pictures of sorts, but of course the

foreigners had all the scope they wanted. My permits and passes cut no ice at all with the police, for I was again a much-marked man.

I won't drag you through the whole tour, nearly spoilt by the police of both countries. But never once did they succeed in stopping me. So intensive became their efforts that I had to devise drastic counter-measures. One of the most charming people on that royal tour was Herbert King, a millionaire member of Lloyds. He has just sold a block of property in the Aldwych for a quarter of a million.

We met in the dining-room of the Grand Hotel, Stockholm. He dined and wined us on the best. He had seen me operating under difficulties and asked why the police made a dead set on camera-men. He wanted to know all about it and offered to be my assistant for the rest of the tour. The first job was almost a free fight. He saw what I was up against. His help was priceless when he suggested that instead of taking up a position where the police knew exactly where to find me, why not let him take up the position where the real pictures would be taken, and we could change places at the last moment?

Here is an example. The Prince of Wales was to see the building of a wooden house in half an hour—a wonderful performance promising good stuff. We went early to the spot, a few miles from the capital. We selected the best place to take photos from. He would hold that down, and I could show myself in a position some distance away. When the police came to blot me out with their backs I could change positions, and they would not have time to change with me.

The show came on, and the crowds surged up. The police, as expected, marked where I was, and just before the actual building demonstration was to start they arrived and completely cut out my view. There was Herbert King, innocent spectator, at the other end, and, in addition, he had arranged a passage for me at the back of the crowd. The Prince arrived, the band played the National Anthem, while I crept away and Perle took my place. Herbert steered me into the position where I got wonderful close-up stuff of the demonstration and also of the Prince as a spectator.

I crept back to the blocked position with a bag of good pictures. When it was all over I mentioned that I had a good picture of the police backs, and one replied that it was all I would get on that tour. I pretended a little annoyance, but could not keep it up

when I watched their faces looking at my pictures in the *Daily Sketch* next day.

This is how I covered that tour, successful only with the help of my friend Herbert King. Day after day the police blocked my views, but the pictures came out just the same. It was their game, but I got tired of it. The rest of the photographers returned to London after the first day's free fight for pictures.

Only once did I come unstuck, when Herbert could not accompany me. The royal party went to visit the world's largest dynamo works. I went early, and hid in the building. When the party neared the dynamo I flashed them. The Swedish firm wanted this royal picture publicity, and were helpful. They arranged my journey back to Stockholm on the royal train. But I had been spotted by the Prince's very own detective, who had me turfed out on to the platform. They got their laugh at last. I tried to double back into a lavatory, but off the train I had to go. Their mean effort wasted one of my precious days. Still, the pictures arrived in London just the same. But I always took Herbert King with me after this.

A funny incident happened in the Electrolux works near Stockholm. The Princes were to be taken round the shops where the various parts were made and assembled. I had a special permit and a beautifully printed invitation. The proceedings went just as usual, all quiet and nice until the royal party arrived. Then everyone panicked. As I was now the only photographer on the job, all the police converged on me. Mind you, as yet I was nowhere near them. In the distance were the directors of Electrolux, bowing and scraping, with the minor officials darting about like dogs at a fair.

As the first hand fell on me, I said something. They were really going beyond the limit of patience. My voice went out of control. As the large party came sweeping along, the leader detached himself and came towards me, struggling with the police, who had not only edged me into a corner, but would not even let me leave the place. What was all this? he asked.

Briefly I replied that here was I, invited to photograph the works and yet as usual the police turned on me to spoil the pictures. What the hell did he mean by it? Let me get out of the place, I said.

"Percy Brown, don't you know me?" said the director.

I peered into his face, and I did now recognise him! A stable

companion of German prison days, R. G. Faulkner, now director of Electrolux. Did he wave them away? What a morning we had taking pictures—from all angles! He made so many opportunities I ran short of plates.

Another good friend was Captain Murray, *Times* correspondent in Stockholm. No pressmen go to Sweden without being helped by him. He arranged all sort of parties for us, and nothing was too much trouble for him. The best he arranged was paid for by the Stockholm Selfridges. There was just one snag. I had no evening tails, only a dinner-jacket. Herbert King had everything, but might be invited to the party. I took him to the bar, and after a few minutes' beating about the bush he presented me with his suit of tails, collar and tie, shirt and shoes, which fitted as if made for me. His man turned me out like a fashion plate. A useful pal to have on a journey.

The party went over perfectly. Those Swedes surpassed themselves in their selection of the choicest food and wines. I told Captain Murray about the suit. Of course he told the guests in a funny speech. The hosts wanted to know the generous lender. A search was made, and Herbert was found in the public restaurant just settling down to his dinner. He was brought in and given the seat of honour in the party, for services rendered to the Press. The theme developed, and speeches were made by the magnates, who became like happy little boys again.

It was a good note to finish on, for, whatever happened, I vowed never to tackle another royal tour. It was fun to outwit the entourage, but sooner or later it would get beyond a joke. I explained to Sir Godfrey Thomas how the record of pictures had been ruined. Instead of having lovely backgrounds of the beautiful places we had visited, we had a succession of close-ups. He did try to mend matters when it was too late.

When the royal party departed there was relief everywhere. Even the police relaxed and said they were sorry they had spoilt so many pictures. But they had had their orders. Orders from whom and to do what? And here is my last word to the entourage:

Hitler proved himself hell's own picture-spoiler, for he has not only destroyed that treasure-house of photography, the *Daily Sketch* library, but he killed Maxwell, one of Fleet Street's best men, and other members of the staff.

Before you spoil any more pictures, and if you are still allowed

to continue this game of yours, just remember that you are destroying historical records. Our cameras are merely the instruments. History would have been debunked long ago if there had always been camera-men. Don't think of yourselves. Think of posterity, and what they will think of you destroyers. It is not the rigidly posed picture which tells the story, but natural snaps with backgrounds fully taken in. Do your job without exceeding your duty.

And may we never meet again.



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### A PRESSMAN'S PERFECT DAY

AS A CONTRAST TO THE last story let me slip back a few years to one example of an ideal assignment. Calvert often gave me jobs which had not only never been covered but offered no prospects of pictures. New subjects became a mania with him. If some function had never been done before, he would shrug his shoulders and just say, "Why not?"

One morning he really handed me a brute. I was to smuggle my camera into the Cambridge Union and photograph its Centenary Celebrations, which was like trying to take a roulette wheel into paradise. The guests included constellations of stars of the Church, Literature, Law, Politics and the Arts. To make matters more difficult, the Duke of York and his party were to be present. What a hope for a camera-man!

I knew General Seely, now Lord Mottistone, and Viscount Ullswater—both unlikely to be of any help at this exclusive function. The rest were high up in the intellectual stratosphere inaccessible to pressmen. Still, I said I would have a go, for I am a believer in miracles.

Calvert suggested that I should go down to Cambridge the night before to see what could be done. I found the Cambridge Union Building enveloped in hush-hush. No one would even answer a question, and the bursar looked right through me, as if I were made of air. A quick visit to the hotels brought me nothing, nor did a short pub-crawl. Nor could I find a clue at the taxi ranks. It seemed hopeless, so I did not sleep well, and started out early next morning looking for something to help me to get into the exclusive building to cover the celebrations. I sneaked into the Union while they were cleaning it, and noted a stairway leading up to a balcony running along one side. This might be useful if I could get past the keepers, I thought. I returned to the taxi rank and found a man of enterprise. He said an important personage was visiting Cambridge, because the police had given themselves a special clean-up, which happened only once a year. He knew because he had lent his policeman neighbour a button-stick!

If only he could find out what the royal party were doing that

day I would pay him double fares. He made me an offer. If he could not find the party, he would charge me nothing for the ride. If successful, I would give him thirty shillings. He drove me miles into the lovely country and made several enquiries. At last he got a clue, and drove on it hell for leather. Mr. Adéane, Lord-Lieutenant of the County, was giving a big party. Perhaps the Duke was there? The driver was now using his taxi like a tank, for he drove up lanes full of pot-holes into a wood worse than a ploughed field. He got down and listened. He said he heard some shots.

"There's something going on over there," he said, pointing away to the right. "Go and do a bit of scouting yourself, for they might hear the old car smashing along."

He advised me to stalk the party by taking cover in the ditches under the hedges, and warned me that the Lord-Lieutenant hated camera-men. Some had been thrown out last year during a big shoot. After ten minutes of creeping I came in sight of the biggest shoot I had ever seen. Right in front was the Duke himself, with Commander Louis Greig.

Even from the distance I could pick out many titles—British aristocracy at its best. Nowhere had I seen more lovely girls. Who knows? I might get the first picture of the future Queen of England. How my imagination ran away with me! I soon came down to earth when I saw scores of keepers and beaters making a cordon round the party. How to get among that crowd without being seen was now my problem. Servants, directed by the butler, were preparing the lunch on trestle tables. Seeing the steaming hot-pot, the stacks of huge meat-pies, joints, salads and trifles made me very hungry, in spite of my anxiety to get some pictures. What a busy party they looked as they darted here and there with the plates and cutlery! I moved nearer to the hedge. Through a gap I took two long shots. I squirmed a little nearer and got a better picture. A tree gave me some cover for a forty-yards shot.

That done, of course I was still not satisfied. Should I take a chance and walk right into the party, slap on some plates quickly and get thrown out with some good close-ups? I decided on the gamble, all or nothing. If only I could show enough assurance I might make them feel that I had been sent officially at the last moment. I covered the forty yards and plunged into the crowd, and took a lovely picture of the Duke talking to the guests. Then

the keepers started to close round me. I kept weaving in and out to get two more shots before the Duke saw me. Now for it.

"Ah, the photographer has arrived," he called to Mr. Adeane, who stared at me as if I had arrived from the skies.

Everybody looked very puzzled, especially the keepers. But the Duke told the guests to line up for a group picture! When I finished off this one he arranged another at the long table. My luck was well in!

After I had taken some pictures, the Duke discussed photography, and asked to see my camera. He asked many questions while moving the focussing lever and diaphragm. Although I did not know it then, I was giving the present King his first lesson in photography. Soon afterwards he bought a Press camera. I could tell that he had a feeling for it by the way he handled the adjustments. Then Mr. Adeane came up and said:

"You must be hungry; come and have some lunch."

He led me into the shooting-box, and a delicious lunch was set before me. I gave it my exclusive attention. When I finished a pint of cider I went towards where my taxi-man was hiding and gave him the signal. I handed him three pounds, the butler gave him a good lunch, and we were now both in the party.

Lunch finished, Mr. Adeane signalled the restart of the shoot. The beaters and keepers moved off to the coverts, and we followed. A few more pictures of the actual shooting would fill up my own bag nicely, I thought. The beaters made special efforts on this very special day, and drove scores of fine birds over us. I kept close to the Duke, but once I stepped out of the line a few yards to get a full picture of him actually bringing down a bird. A cock pheasant flew low over the Duke's gun. He followed it in his sights and then let fly. I nearly got the full charge. The bird fell with a thud at my feet. The Duke came out to me, relieved that he had not shot a pressman, and gave me some advice about staying in line *with* the guns and not *away* from them.

This lovely afternoon, like all good things, had to come to an end. As the light faded the keepers collected the birds and filled two waggons. Just before the journey back to the hall Mr. Adeane selected a brace of fine plump birds and put a label on them.

"Don't forget to take them home tonight," he said, with a laugh.

He made room for me in the car and gave me an old-fashioned high tea. Louis Greig came to see me in the middle of it and asked me if I would like a lift back to Cambridge, as he was keeping a seat for me in the royal car. They would be staying with Mr. Adeane for about an hour. My luck was holding well.

The time passed quickly enough while I speculated on my chances of getting into the Cambridge Union for the great debate. Leave well alone, I thought, after such generous treatment. Then I would spur myself to go out for the full day. I was greedy, for I already had a bag of fine pictures, a brace of fine birds and had had a wonderful day in the country. Beyond all this there was the possibility that I might have the future Queen of England on one of my plates. This was at the time when Fleet Street was all agog for the name of the first girl to be engaged to any one of our Princes. I ran my finger down the list of those society beauties, and my pictures remained on the art editor's table for months. Two of the ladies were tipped as certain royal brides to be.

As we drove into Cambridge, Commander Greig asked me where he could drop me. At the Union, I said. What a smile of friendly understanding he passed me in the gloom of the evening! The car stopped at the door, and servants rushed to attend to the royal party. I was out first, and stayed waiting so that I could walk with them through the sacred doorway. The two old door-men gave me a searching look, but dared not interfere, so close was I to the Duke. I was in Royal sanctuary now. We passed down the short hall, and we parted at the stairs. They went on to the main hall, and very circumspectly I went up to the balcony.

As I was judging the distance to the chairman's seat, the local photographer arrived with two large cameras and very large flashlight balloons used by the old-timers to trap the smoke and fumes. He and his assistants gave me a searching look, and asked me if I had a permit. Apparently the local man had done the job for years and his father before him, but never for Press publication. I just nodded to the Duke and Louis Greig, who happened to look our way at that moment. Only the university officials could spoil my evening now. I wanted the debate to begin.

At last the chairman took his place and the hall filled with members and guests—a colossal brains trust, if you like. My heart missed several beats when an attendant visited me in the

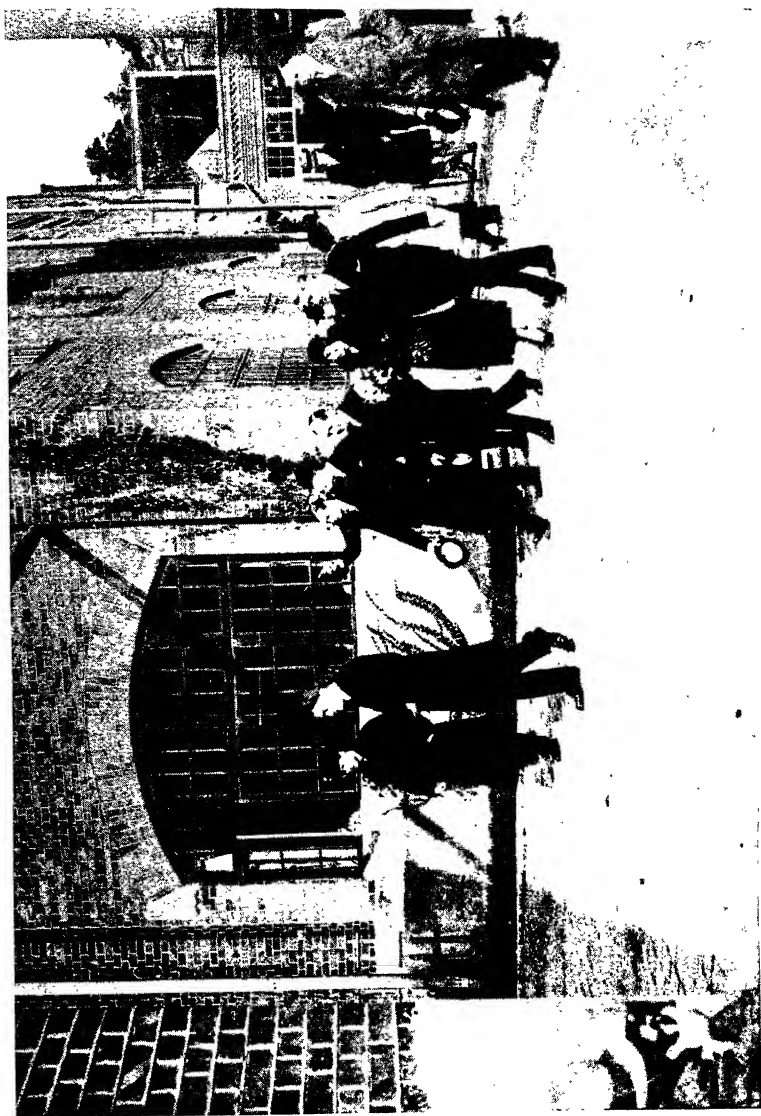
balcony. Had I permission? Did the official photographer who had been with the royal party all day need permission? You cannot fool old servants. What they don't know, they sense. He stood stock still for a few seconds, then sullenly went on his rounds and left me in peace. The local man had been listening, so now became very helpful and offered me the use of his flashlight arrangements.

Everything went smoothly on that most perfect of days. Nothing could go wrong. There was that wonderful crowd of members and distinguished guests, and right bang in the middle was the Duke, our future King. The local photographer now seemed more anxious about my pictures than his own, and did all the work. All I had to do was to take my lens cap off and put it on again when the flashes exploded. And these *were* explosions, for the assistants made up very large charges. They cleverly trapped the smoke in the huge balloons and hurried out with it, otherwise the debate would have carried on under a dense smoke-screen.

I wrote down the names left to right, the local man showing me his list, correctly made out. I packed my camera and tripod, and as I was turning to the back stairs, the Duke and the Commander glanced up and smiled. General Seely was making one of his speeches, but I could not resist making the tiniest gesture of thanks. They had given me a lovely day without any fuss or worry, no police or officials.

I was just passing out to the street when one of the hefty attendants drew me back to a good old-fashioned supper. Who arranged that little banquet, complete with a bottle of Burgundy, I shall never know, but it was in keeping with everything else which had happened that day. The attendants shook hands warmly with the temporary royal photographer, and I went off to find the taxi-man. Without him, in the first place, the day might have been blank. We had a couple of drinks and a talk. So much on top of the world did I feel that I slipped him another ten shillings.

I stayed the night in Cambridge. There was no competition, and therefore no hurry to rush back to the office. I had enough pictures to fill several *Daily Graphics*. The debate picture was spread right across the double page inside—very rarely done this way in those valuable pages. Calvert gasped when he saw the stuff, and so much of it all in one day. He gave much time to the



THE PRINCE OF WALES AND PRINCE GEORGE BEING CONDUCTED BY THE MANAGING DIRECTOR  
OF ELECTROLUX AROUND THEIR GREAT FACTORIES IN SWEDEN.



THIS PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS THE ACTUAL BEGINNING OF THE REVOLUTION IN MADRID.

The students were the knife-edge of the movement, and they are seen here outside their Atocha Hospital carrying away their first casualty, having fought the police right out of the street.

pictures of the beautiful aristocrats. Every rumour of a royal engagement sent the art-room staff peering over my prints.

And so ended a pressman's perfect day.

### HOW SCOOPS ARE MADE

Here is a separate incident to add to the perfect day, although it happened after we had gone over to the *Daily Sketch*—just to illustrate the fact that with some personalities you cannot go wrong, while with others you cannot go right.

Tom Noble had his own way of handling his staff. One Saturday afternoon I had just turned up for night duty. He called me to his office to tell me he had arranged dinner for me at Frascati's in the private salon next to the banquet room where the Zeebrugge heroes were to dine. Sir Roger Keyes was to speak. I was to take Perle.

At seven o'clock we found a banquet waiting for us and two waiters in attendance. It was a delicious meal, starting with hors d'œuvres, bisque d'homard and sole Frascati. We paused after the chicken Maryland, weakly resisting a second bottle of Bollinger champagne. How we used to eat in those days! It seems criminal now. In the banquet hall adjoining, Sir Roger was making the sailors laugh.

"Speeches! What about a picture?" said Perle, keeping her mind on my job.

The dinner had been so well thought out I had forgotten I was on duty. I peered through the doorway, and for a moment I could not see how I was going to get a picture of that merry crowd through the smoke-screen they had set up with their strong tobacco. I slipped into the nearest chair. A sailor, Jack Bailey, who served in H.M.S. *Collingwood* during the Battle of Jutland, asked me to have a drink. Then I invited him to have a drink with us—a glass of vintage port. As he was sipping it he said:

"This wine brings back a funny incident. When I was serving in *Collingwood*, looking after Prince Albert in number two turret before the Battle of Jutland, the Prince said . . ."

Now for a sailor's yarn, I thought, for who had heard of one of our royal Princes fighting in the world's greatest naval battle? Certainly not Fleet Street. Anyway, I handed another large port to this entertaining sailor. I did not believe him, but his manner of telling was wonderful.



Just before the battle began, continued my friend, he was carrying out an order given him by Prince Albert, who, noticing that his man was nervous, sent him below to have a glass of the Prince's private port.

"It was the very same stuff as this, and it drove away all my windiness," said Jack Bailey with relish.

He was insistent and still sober. I went below to the chief, who was giving a party in the restaurant. I asked him what he thought of the story, Prince Albert in the Battle of Jutland. He told me not to let the Navy pull my leg. I returned to find that Perle had got the sailor to our table. Under her influence he was becoming gloriously reminiscent. He gave us close-up views of the battle. What a wonderful story, if true! Perle said it must be true, or the man was the world's greatest liar. I was worried now, so again I went below to the chief. He was still unimpressed. But I was impressed, and set about checking the story. I rang our library, where no reference could be found in the records nor in the newspaper cuttings. The night news-editor, the famous Peter Cheyney, ridiculed the idea. There was no chance of it being true, for the Prince was too young in those days to be in charge of anything, he said. Besides, the Prince was too ill at that time, and was ashore in hospital. Peter should be right, for after all the news-editor is the key man who sees the paper built up for publication.

Imagine my dilemma. The office experts should know. But they did not know. The very thought of any other paper getting hold of the story made me stick to it. If you give your paper a dud story, especially concerning the royal family, you are fired at a minute's notice, without a come-back. That is why old-timers never take a chance. When in doubt leave it out, is their rule. Perle gave me a tot of old cognac and told me to think of some way of checking this tale, which she was sure was true.

At last I got a hunch. Sir Roger was speaking again. I sidled up to the top table and waited until he sat down. Could I have a word with him on a life-and-death matter? So, behind the dividing curtains, I put my question.

"Of course Prince Albert fought in the Battle of Jutland. Didn't you know?" said the Admiral, and went on to fill in the details for me. Yes, of course he would vouch for it to my editor, if necessary. He did better than that. He signed the few notes I had made. He promised to keep this wonderful, unrecorded

news story secret until the *Sunday Graphic* had published it. No use getting hold of a scoop to leak out for other papers to spoil it.

Full of confidence now, I taxied to the office and reassured the editor, who now agreed to print the story and pictures. Then I returned to Frascati's to find Peter Cheyney still there. Even then they did not like the story, but a whisper convinced Peter. The time rolled on, and I prayed that no one blabbed out the story, even in confidence. I went below to the telephone exchange to see if any rival had yet got the message to send to Fleet Street. I was lucky right to the moment the paper went to press.

The *Sunday Graphic* splashed my pictures and story given me by a good-natured sailor. That was the first news the world had that our present King had fought in the Battle of Jutland. All out of a banquet for me and my girl given by the chief. That is one way of getting scoops.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### BIG BUSINESS MYSTERY

I BECAME INTERESTED IN inventions by accident. Years ago I picked up a book in the prison camp library, and was staggered when I read that I must regard myself as just a mass of chemical atoms temporarily held together by a mystery called life. I was still more shaken when I read that sooner or later not only do we all disintegrate to dust, but finally to gas and vapour! My own atoms, freed from my control, would float away and become part of something else, a tree, an animal, or perhaps another human being, but never wasted. Worst of all, even the very earth we stood on was doomed to go up in gas some time.

To think that we, the human race, lords of creation, yet not even lords of our own earth, it seemed, were but a freak of temperatures, one of Nature's flukes or faults. The way the professor put it we might still be regarded as a great scourge started by Adam and Eve, who had, by sheer weight of size and numbers, replaced some greater but smaller race! It was humiliating to think that we had arrived on earth as casually as a scourge of 'flu.

Then why all this hurry to destroy ourselves before our time? Why this mass suicide? Surely others knew the facts as well as the professor and myself! Or was I his only reader and together we alone shared these terrible secrets?

To think that all that mankind had learnt to do thoroughly, with its thousands of years of civilisation, its millions of books, ancient and modern, to guide it, was to destroy itself! Surely if religion could do nothing about it, then chemistry should show us what fools we have been up till now!

The subject developed too big for my small brain, as I thought of the mass vapouring and gasifying going on to get us back to atoms floating in space. It would be funny if, while spending a hundred millions a day blowing each other to pieces, we should accidentally blow up the very earth we stood on!

I put the book back on the shelf and went on to the Arts and Science Union, where a chatty little circle were discussing coal, the stuff we pinched from the German officers' store. In front of them was a big chart. On the top in large letters was COAL.

Leading out of it was a thick line which divided into a complicated genealogical tree with a hundred sub-sections, at the end of which were tiny panels of analysis. Here was something I could better understand. Afterwards they took me into their laboratory and gave me a smattering of chemistry, making me realise that out of every ton of coal hacked from the earth half of it was wasted.

The casual study of that chart, showing coal as the great prolific parent of a thousand other things used by man, was to cost me something later.

Searching one's memory is like looking into a store of old stage back-cloths. When you have found the one you want, it is easy to remember the rest of the scenery and props to set with it.

Against my will I listened to the troubles of an inventor. He wanted me to back him until he got on his feet. Henry was a man of ideas, and could certainly paint the picture. But the world would not listen. He was hungry, so I took him home. Over food I said I was no business man and could not help him. Besides, he had come at the wrong moment, for I too was not in a strong financial position. But he clung to me.

I had just bought a very small furnished house when the solicitor found two mortgages on the property and three bills of sale on the furniture. The seller was something unheard of, a bankrupt *bookmaker*! He had run his business through fried-fish shops, with the small house as a headquarters. He had got himself into a tangle and tried to sell me for eleven hundred and fifty pounds the house and the furniture, with my bank finding most of the money.

Behind his hand he warned me against having a solicitor on the deal. He was ready to hand over the house with its mortgages and bills of sale, which would have meant my having to find another thousand pounds! Van Damm of Fleet Street saved me from this watery grave.

My mother and I settled in the house, not in the best of neighbourhoods, but, with its day and night tram service, very handy for the office. So here hungry Henry came to see me to talk inventions and whet my appetite for a million pounds. He was hard up, and enjoyed my mother's cooking. It was a treat to see him eat. As I have starved twice, I understood his interest in me. But I resisted his suggestion to go into partnership.

Henry waited his time. He was interesting, and to my mother

entertaining. At last I weakened and made an arrangement to back him until he touched big money. Then he could repay what he owed and whatever he thought my services were worth. No, he said, we must go fifty-fifty. If he sold out for a million, I must have half. We signed an agreement, which said I was to pay my partner four pounds a week and expenses.

Henry certainly made me feel responsible for his destiny, for then I was the only one to listen to him. By the time he had finished a second steak he had put me in Park Lane with servants and a Rolls-Royce for my mother. No more having to traipse around with a heavy camera already dragging down my left shoulder three inches below the right, he said.

Really I believed that all Henry needed was a period of peace of mind to restore his confidence, to get on his feet, and off my hands. Big business was easy once you got a start, he said. My mother listened, but was against a partnership. What was the use of a lot of money as long as one could live without too much worry? She was right, but I felt just the same. Now, instead of discussing plans openly over meals in our tiny kitchen, we continued in secret. Keeping anything from my mother was like living a double life.

We rented a small office in the city, and I set about selling the ideas Henry had sold to me. It was tough going. I learnt a lot, but not enough. For the first time I learnt the duties of a patent agent, the only person sure of making money from inventions! Henry introduced me to an affluent-looking, perfectly groomed gentleman in a finely furnished city office. I thought a patent agent functioned like other agents, land or literary, and *sold* something for his clients. Oh, dear, no! Patronisingly he discussed our ideas, sketches and specifications. As he gathered these up into one neat bundle, he said he would take up the matter with His Majesty's Patent Office and apply for a year's "PROTECTION".

In my innocence I asked him the name of a firm sufficiently interested to manufacture on a large scale. He would not know, he said, as that was *not* his sphere. He dealt exclusively with inventors and the Patent Office. What a sucker I felt as I parted with a good-sized cheque!

Another queer thing I noticed was that there are more people trying to steal inventions than there are successful inventors. They spend their days in the Patent Office searching for a flaw

in the law through which they can exploit an idea without having to buy it.

What a struggle I had trying to sell one of the patents! I interested many, but no one would buy. Even Henry with his spell-binding patter could do nothing when it came to closing a deal. They seemed afraid of him. Unfortunately he was no listener. All we could do was to license one idea to a food-products company. They took Henry with it and paid him four pounds a week—only a temporary relief, for he soon came back to me, leaving the idea behind. The board would not take his advice on the method of marketing, so he decided to wait for the royalties on sales. I received nothing, and continued to pay his wages and expenses.

I was tiring under the strain of holding my Press job and trying to place patents in between. Expenses increased. I pegged away, for I dare not admit failure to my mother. At the back of my mind was one likely winner, an economic method for the low-temperature carbonisation of coal. I was no chemist, but I did know what was needed to make low-temperature carbonisation a profitable process. There was no secret in it. It was a matter of working it at a profit by labour-saving methods.

Most people know there is a great waste in carbonising coal at high temperature to get gas and coke and also burning it in open grates. Few people bothered about it in those days, for there were unlimited quantities of coal, and miners were cheap and plentiful. All that rich black smoke going heavenwards and dropping back on to us in dust is now very valuable. Tar, once a waste product useful only for preserving out-houses, now produces valuable chemicals. Even rubber is now made from it. In the old days there was no need for a labour-saving process, for coal was just black dirt. A scarcity of miners now makes coal black gold.

Such was the problem: to devise a method of extracting all the by-products, leaving a residue of smokeless fuel for use in grates. This is how we developed it. The baking of pottery was revolutionised many years ago by the invention of a continuous oven built by one of Henry's ancestors. Before this, half the stuff got cracked by the sudden changes of temperatures. As the main purpose of the pottery oven was to control a gradually rising heat, I suggested to Henry that we convert the oven into a continuous carboniser. We discussed details with an engineer who knew how metals behaved under certain heats and strains. The heat for

baking pottery and carbonising coal must be raised very slowly from a low to a high temperature, and when the processes are completed must be slowly reduced down to normal. At certain temperatures the gases and by-products could be taken off. So we made a large model of a complete unit which showed the new method working from raw coal being fed into hoppers to complete the process.

I dodged about between covering weddings and funerals, taxiing the model about London and spreading our drawings, specifications and descriptions before financiers. One well-known group in particular asked to see our model. Their capital ran into millions. With renewed hope we went through the motions, assembling the model and accessories on the board-room table in the huge city offices. This time we really believed we had brought off a deal. Between discussions on the great day I covered a wedding at St. Margaret's and exchanged a City assignment with a pal. We lunched with two directors, after which it seemed just a matter of coming to terms.

A week went by. I phoned the secretary, who said that their engineer had not completed his survey. Henry was already planning a glorious future. I was getting short of money. Nothing much happened. The company wanted two-fifths interest in the patent, to which we agreed if they would build a plant. The matter hung fire for more weeks. While negotiations dragged on, the year's protection period was passing. This meant that soon I would have to begin paying patent fees for each coal-producing country interested in carbonising patents. Or we would lose the patent!

We made one more effort to close with the wealthy group, and on my day off went to meet the board. This time they wanted three-fifths interest. We were getting desperate, so again agreed, if they would only build a complete unit. By now they had found out that we were only small fry with a big idea and just toyed with us. They now wanted three months to consider how best to exploit the new method.

I cut short the discussions by calling a taxi and dismantling the model. Oh, but I could not do that during negotiations, they said. I lingered on for any sign of hope. All that we heard was the same airy, tiresome talk we had heard for weeks. Did they want it or not? I asked, bluntly. It all depended on certain circumstances, in the event of which . . .

We carried the model out to the taxi with the board gaping at us, as grim as undertakers carrying out a coffin. Then I asked for our plans and specifications. They would send them on. I wanted these before I left, which was regarded as a piece of impertinence by the managing director. Henry looked like caving in, so I told him and the driver to take away the model and I would wait for our papers. But he waited during the half hour it took to prise our property out of them, while I ticked off each bundle on my list. It was a ridiculous and unbelievable scene. When I had recovered our papers and sections, I turned to the remaining members of the board and told them if at any time they wanted to reconsider the oven, providing we had not closed with another group, we would be pleased to receive them at our office.

I took Henry to Simpson's for a good meal, with their peacetime second-helpings to cheer him up. I knew I had not the right technique, and I wondered what *was* the right technique to use with big business. Henry took his wages and went home despondent.

I collected my camera at the office and went on to cover the afternoon job—a refreshing contrast, photographing a live eel which a mother in a Borough slum had bought to eat! When her children saw it still alive in a wash-bowl, and it seemed to answer to the name of Billy, they decided to keep it as a pet. I hope you remember the pictures, for that eel lived a long time in a tiny bath, and really did answer to his name when they called him for his food. The last time I saw him he was swimming happily in his slum sanctuary, the pride of the family.

The first financial help came in a round-about way. When I returned to the office with the eel pictures, Bill Curnock sent me to Shrewsbury, my home town, to cover the world's most wonderful flower show. Nor could I persuade him to switch me back to a London job. He said I ought to welcome the chance of visiting old friends. It was so many years since I had left Shrewsbury no one would know me, I replied. I dare not tell him of my side line, so I had to go.

As soon as I got into Shrewsbury I started recognising old playmates: Darky Williams, now station foreman; Harry Phillips, foreman at Treasure's; Hetty Morris, the carriage-cleaner, and still a fine footballer, and many others. Even for a Tuesday before the two-day show the town was crowded. I managed to squeeze



into the Raven Hotel, full of county folks. Squinting at me down a passage while I was eating were some of my old school-mates, now working as waiters, porters and garage hands. They made time for a reunion in the bar after they had done their jobs.

The secretary of the flower show was a stranger, having come to Shrewsbury after I had emigrated. It was wonderful to be back, mingling again with that hundred thousand crowd. Every now and then a face would come plunging through the crowd to greet me.

There is nothing in the world like the Shrewsbury Show, where a hundred thousand people make a date—for next year. The famous Quarry was created by Nature specially to hold it. When you pass the graceful iron gates you see vistas of high trees in all directions. Directly in front is a leafy arched avenue like the columns of a cathedral. The avenue on your right encloses the green acres of grass sloping away to the crescent-shaped River Severn, flowing majestically along the lower side of the Quarry under the famous Shrewsbury Schools.

Here are the horse-leaping competitions round a miniature Grand National course. A quarter of a mile along the river the avenue turns up to enclose the other half of the Quarry. A middle avenue divides the flowers and music from the stage and aerial shows. Here is a natural amphitheatre where fifty thousand faces stare up at the Stratosphere Girl performing on the point of a steel mast which seems to pierce the clouds above St. Chad's church steeple.

A very high tight-rope act was the star turn in my day, and a one-legged cyclist dived from a dizzily placed platform into a tiny tank. The Stratosphere Girl crashed to her death after she had performed at Shrewsbury. The tapering steel snapped near the top as she swayed rhythmically in the wind. She was dashed to shapelessness, as was her brother a few weeks before. When I took her picture she spoke perfect German, but her father, a mass of muscle and arrogance, said they were Swiss. To keep her fit for this great act, she said, she drank a bottle of olive oil every day.

Thousands on the slopes watch the magnificent stage shows of ladder-walkers, jugglers, trapeze artists, clowns and musicians continuously from morning until the huge fireworks display. This is the country people's carnival, their day in the year to forget all troubles and meet their friends and relations. Rain or shine the show goes on.

From the tight-rope platform I got my best picture of massed umbrellas. I snapped the horse-leaping competitions and went on to the bandstand, enlarged for the great music festival, where you hear the combined Guards bands. The avenues of trees, the Severn flowing under the steep green slopes, make natural acoustics for this annual festival of fine music.

On the high ground to the left, with the church as a background, are the great flower-tents, where all classes show, from the King down to the cottager. Here you find the millionaire's priceless orchids and the labourer's humble spuds. The air is full of the scents of nurseries and the countryside. What a scramble there is on the last evening to buy these exquisite exhibits the exhibitors leave behind!

As I wandered round the lovely grounds I looked for the places where as a kid I used to sneak in. The old custom still prevails, for there were the children doing the same thing, waiting for the policeman to take his refreshment while they, like eels, slithered under the canvas barriers.

Behind the flower-tents was the captive balloon which provided me with a thousand-feet elevation from which to take a grand general view. From here Captain Spencer soared to the skies to give his first parachute displays.

When I returned to the secretary's tent, Billy Field, a *Daily Sketch* colleague, had arrived. The Press were getting drinks and their invitations to lunch. He pointed to the inner tent reserved for special guests, Old Proud Salopians. While Billy was discussing this point with the secretary, he realised that it meant something to be born in this ancient borough. Up to that moment I was an outsider. With one remark Billy brought me from the outer sphere right back home into the heart of things.

"You talk about Proud Salopians, what about your Percy Brown, born and bred in Shrewsbury?" said my colleague, pointing me out at the back.

The secretary, George Brazier, looked amazed, and at once fetched me right into the inner circle of Proud Salopians. Until then I had had no idea what a distinction it was to be born in Shrewsbury. Even the secretary himself could not claim the honour. And so the fun began. I got my plates away on the train, and, except for the fireworks, I had done for the day. Then the miracle happened.

When I returned to the inner circle my colleagues were still at

the bar. Another Proud Salopian had turned up—Bill Wigley of the *Daily News*. He was brought in proudly by Cyril Brazier, son of the secretary, and just recovering from war wounds. He, Tom Davies, Sydney Bernstein and George Holt were about to found the Shrewsbury Cinemas Syndicate. Cyril asked me if I would like to come in with them?

What an offer from my home town! I dared not even dally with the idea, for I had too much on my plate already. He asked me what it was, outside Press work. I told him about our invention to improve the use of coal. Was I short of capital? he inquired. I explained how I was placed. Then what about five hundred pounds to get the thing started? He said he knew how difficult it was to convert an idea into a working proposition.

At this time he himself was deep in his own difficult negotiations for cinema sites, and yet he insisted on giving me a cheque for five hundred pounds to form a small syndicate, he and his father and Henry and I. Supposing he lost his money? I said. He replied that if it was good enough for me it was good enough for them. You cannot go wrong when you back a Proud Salopian, he added. What a standard to live up to! Before that day he had never heard of me!

They made me a member of the Severnside Bowling Club, a rollicking crowd of Shrewsbury business men, where I met my old bandmaster, Fred Rowlands. During the show and after we continued the revels under the old Town Walls until three a.m. For me it was a grand come-back to my home town. Gone were the snobbery and class distinctions of the old days. They would not let me sit until I had told them of where I had been while away from Shrewsbury.

The first thing I did when I got back to London was to photograph the cheque for five hundred pounds given me by Cyril Brazier—more precious to me than a fidelity bond. I locked it away and bought a book on how to form a company. I could not understand it. I had no business brain, anyway. I found big business like press-photography, not to be learnt from a book. All I wanted was to get the process launched by a firm who knew the coal business. The Braziers came to London to show me and draw up an agreement. The money was to be spent on new models and drawings to show big business, whom we hoped to induce to build a plant. I now had more heart for the struggle, and invited several companies to look at our improved models and

specifications. I was now writing better publicity matter, and I felt that by sticking it we should sell out to a good group. Still, I was quite frank with my colleagues. My future would not be in coal, but in the Press game. The more I studied big business the less I understood it. It is more than a mystery, it is a miracle, how any project is put over through those money wizards.

Fleet Street to me was a care-free colony untroubled by the money disease. Pressmen were always bright and helpful, and worked and lived much quicker than the ordinary man. Every day they had to make decisions on the spot which, if wrong, would cost them their jobs. Nothing worried them—at least, nothing in comparison with grim and successful business men who never dare relax. Under their happy-go-lucky manner there runs reliability. To be in their team is better than being a boss in anything anywhere.

While covering a week's Winter Sports meeting at St. Moritz I photographed Sir John Cadman of Anglo-Persian Oil, and a famous fuel expert. He was interested in our process, and asked us to demonstrate it in his office. Several times he was on the point of testing the oven on a big scale. He too was in no hurry, and when he finally sent for me it was too late to make a deal.

At this time I took a picture of Sir Alfred Mond and his bevy of millionaires about to form Imperial Chemical Industries. This is the picture which earned for the firm huge sums after the death of the *Daily Graphic*. Sir Alfred considered testing our process against the hydrogenation of coal, the method he finally selected. It was tough going, dealing with these millionaires, but each time we got a better hearing.

Although I knew more than ever this was not my line of country, I worked all the harder to get the syndicate launched and myself paid out. And I sincerely wanted Henry's dreams to become real. His moods changed like mercury. The Braziers did not worry about their money, and felt that sooner or later we would find the right people. They worked hard, too, in trying to interest northern groups in the invention. The best was headed by Colonel Brittlebank from Manchester. He brought ten thousand pounds to the Savoy Hotel to form a company and build the first working unit at a colliery! At last, I thought, we had clicked!

Our small syndicate was to be merged into a company and we could stay and prosper with the business, he said. I ordered a special lunch at the Savoy and a room for the meeting afterwards.

We were a cheery lunch-party of ten. All that it needed now were the signatures. We read and re-read the clauses, passing impressive sheets of foolscap up and down the banquet table. At last all was ready. Then a queer thing happened. Henry suddenly decided not to sign! As our two names were down as co-patentees, it was most important that we assigned our rights to the new company, in which we were to be given generous holdings. But Henry said we must not sign away world rights.

Think of it! Ten thousand pounds on the table with a promise of more to follow for further developments. During the wonderful lunch he had given no indication of his intentions. For the first time since I had known him he would not talk. I tried to see through those honest brown eyes. Already he was a changed man, with a Saville Row suit and his blue-black wavy hair dressed to a millimetre—no longer the hungry old Henry waiting round the corner while I developed my plates.

The Braziers stared at me and Henry, then at Colonel Brittlebank and his group. I made one final effort to induce Henry to sign now we had the chance we had worked months for. He would not speak, and just glided from the meeting and out of my life.

Something had happened over-night, and to this day I don't know what it was. The party hung together for half an hour, and then dissolved in despondency. Every morning I called at our office, but no Henry arrived. I paid the rent and gave up the key.

Not long after the Savoy lunch a solicitor wrote to me saying that he was paying out the Braziers. Unless I signed the enclosed form for the dissolution of the syndicate, they could not be paid out! I went to the lawyer's office and asked him what had happened and for whom he was acting. That did not matter, he said. Again he insisted on my signing the papers, or neither I nor the Braziers would get back any money. I phoned Cyril, and he said sign. As I was morally responsible for his money, I signed away my rights, the dissolution of the syndicate and the partnership. They received one hundred and fifty pounds for their trouble. I tried to find out the names of the new group now behind Henry, but the lawyer would not tell. He added that my old partner was finished with us, and did not want to see us again. As I left that City office I had to laugh at the result of my first business effort. It seemed strange not to have

Henry waiting for me round the corner to ask me anxiously how I had got on.

Anyway, I now had my wages to myself, and had already started to pay off my overdraft. Some weeks later I received a frantic letter from Cyril Brazier enclosing pages of newspaper cuttings advertising the flotation of a company for the exploitation of the carboniser. Huge sums were involved. Big names were in it, and we were clean out of it. The Braziers dashed to London and engaged a City solicitor to fight the new group. I reasoned them out of it, and we went back to the wholesome air of Shrewsbury to forget the whole thing.

Regrets? None—relief so exquisite it was like the passing of a pain.

Years later I met Henry settled in his prosperity. He and his wife were well clothed and fed, living a care-free life in their own freehold home. Henry chided me playfully for still carrying the old camera, dragging down my shoulder still lower. He showed me his possessions and told me of his new pastimes. He had parted with twenty thousand pounds worth of his shares, for he had another grand scheme nearly ready to launch. I congratulated him, and encouraged him to talk of his achievements.

Once I just touched on the old struggles. Yes, I had been useful in bridging that narrow gap, but it was only a question of time before the world recognised his genius. If I had not come along there were plenty of other people anxious to help him, he said. And when I came to think of it I wondered if I had secretly over-rated my help to Henry. I remembered how desperate he was for me to back him. Yet what a trifling matter it was to him now! Here I had been imagining I had been Henry's lifebuoy, while really I was merely the man who threw it to him.

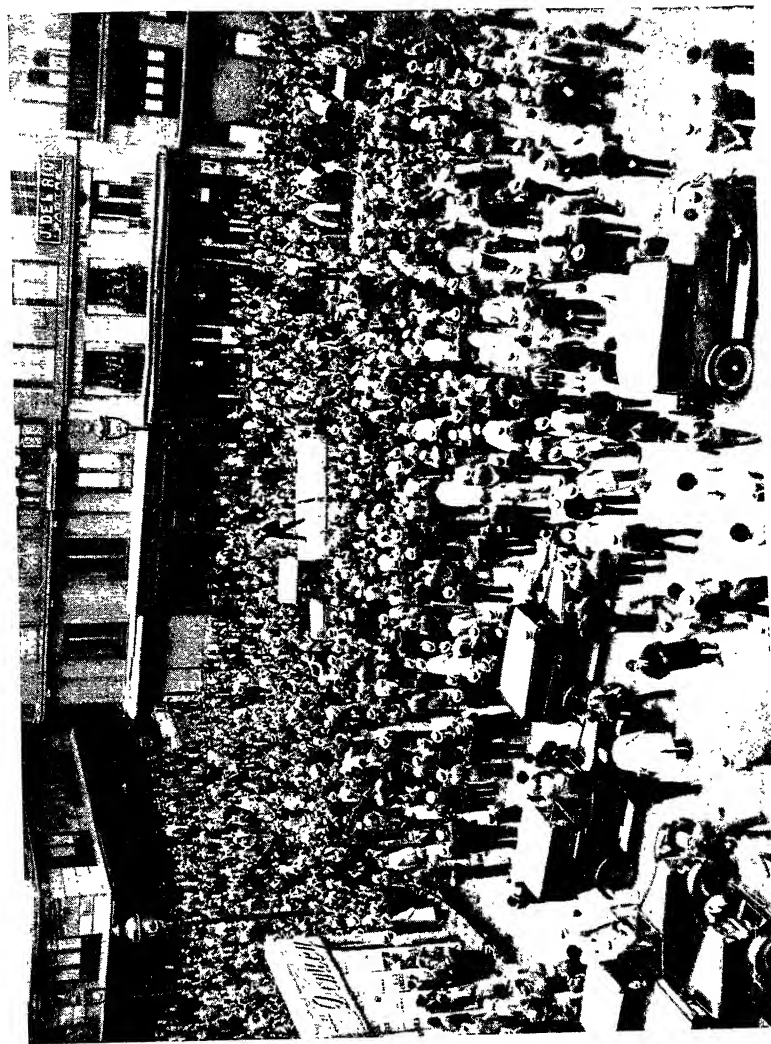
Before I left him in his glory I asked Henry if there was anything else I could do for him. He became serious. Yes, I could help him to find some capital for a new scheme, which would make millions of pounds for the promoters. I could also photograph the secret drawings and sections he was having made. After I had sauntered to my small home I looked in the hall mirror at the reflection of the perfect onion.

Still, I was glad Henry had done well in securing his future. He certainly had something I had not when dealing with big business. What staggered me when meeting those rich financiers who wanted our process was that they wanted so much for so

little. I would start well enough, but by the second meeting they had me well taped. So mean were some you would have thought their lives eternal, and not of just the ordinary human span.

As I stirred my tea in the kitchen, my mind went back to the prison-camp book which had first told me what I was. Again I was staggered to think of the millions of years it had taken to produce the creature called man. Even the animal world, with nothing to go on, no tomes of history, literature and science, only what they get from their mothers, behave better to each other.

One dare not dwell on the awful fact that now man has reached perfection of body and intellect, all he can do with his gifts and privileges is to be unpleasant to his fellow-creatures and, most staggering fact of all, make a battle-ground of this our GARDEN OF EDEN.



PICTURE SHOWS NEXT STAGE OF THE REVOLUTION.

The student on the lorry actually struck the spark which sent the revolution blazing through Spain to drive King Alfonso from his throne. The scene is the famous Puerto del Sol, where all Spanish risings succeed or fail.





THE QUEEN OF SPAIN HOLDS HER LAST COURT, BY THE ROADSIDE BEFORE SHE TAKES THE TRAIN  
TO FRANCE.

Scene is Escorial, near Madrid.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### SPANISH REVOLUTION

SPAIN GAVE ME THE MOST varied opportunities for work and pleasure. During the many months I spent in the land of the sun, sand, and blood, waiting for the revolution, there was never a dull moment. Every street had a story. In this new world everything fascinated me, even the bull-fighting, the cock-fighting and the snail-racing. Yet I am no blood sportsman.

During my first visit, when Billy Field, Ferdinand Tuohy and I were sent on a helter-skelter tour with the Prince of Wales, there was revolution in the air. In fact on a later visit a colleague said I caused it. Judge for yourself when I explain. I contend that the *Daily Mail* were in it, too, for they published an interview with King Alfonso, who said:

"If the people of Spain want a republic, let them vote for it."

He felt secure in the knowledge that there would be no parliamentary elections while he was King. As a sop to the national clamour, Alfonso consented to let the people have municipal elections, never dreaming that these could have the slightest effect on national affairs. Then, listening to bad advice, he relied on his supporters making the local elections show a tremendous majority in favour of the monarchy. But events did not pan out like that. Little did Alfonso know of the overwhelming revolutionary feeling he had increased by his irresponsible remarks. Later I will tell you why I was accused of striking the spark that caused the cleansing fires which flared throughout the country. But first comes the background. It did not need much of a spark to ignite this inflammable material.

My first trip to Spain was with the Prince of Wales, and right up to standard; pressmen pushed all over the place while trying to get a happy picture of the King, still on his shaky throne, and the Prince sent down by King George to try to stabilise it. In Madrid Billy Field and I took our shots on the run along the route to the palace. Even here the Prince would not come on to the balcony to be photographed with his royal host.

The Prince of Wales did not like the job. Nor did we, for

that matter, but we had to try to make happy pictures showing that all was well with Spain. There was the happiness of an English Princess and her family to be considered.

We got our stuff, but with much sweat and some blood when we were shoved off the police car on to the gravel. There was one posed picture allowed by the Prince to the *London Times* and *Daily Mirror* in the gardens. It could have been taken in Kensington for all the relevance it had to the story. Our colleagues had given their word of honour that they would not attempt to take any more pictures. That meant us, too. All were to go home now and leave all those colourful scenes to the Spanish photographers. On one occasion all English cameramen were turned out. The Prince pointed to Billy Field, still hanging on in spite of the police, and asked him who he was.

"Sí, Señor, hasta la dias," replied Bill, with all the Spanish he knew.

"Ah, you are Spanish, you can stay," replied the Prince, with that sweet smile of his.

That is how Billy Field got away with some exclusive pictures while the Spaniards jumped about like bears on hot bricks. With his lean, dark complexion, Billy looked like a Spaniard.

Ferdinand Tuohy made the nights of that short tour compensate for the worries of the days. He knew Spain well, including the night life. We could not resist the Spanish dancing with casanets, massed accordion bands and the lovely cadenzas of the Flamenco, the notes of which cannot be put on paper. So late were we getting back to the hotel there was only time to bath, shave and reload our plates for the next mad rush. The climate was so energising we did not miss our sleep.

Billy stayed until the end of the tour, but I had to take our plates back to London. I had seen quite enough to make me want to return to Spain. The chance came months later, while I was building a wing to our house at Enmore Gardens—Chanak Villa, as my colleagues call it. They said I built it out of my expenses for the Turkish tour. The navvies had just dug out the trenches for the foundations, and the place was in a mess.

I told the chief I could not leave my mother in the muddle. He said I must go to Spain, for it meant real revolution this time. So he asked Skipper, a retired Scotland Yard inspector on the staff, to act as clerk of the works while I was abroad.

What a tour the Chief had marked out for me! Hardly a

town or city was left out. While the revolution was revving up I was to photograph politicians and generals likely to take part in the coming show-down. I made friends everywhere who might help me if communications became broken.

There was never any difficulty about material for pictures and stories. Two hours after I had arrived in San Sebastian I saw rockets out to sea. A ship was wrecked and being driven right on to the sea wall. Not a liner, but big enough to make up my first batch of pictures.

I did not linger in this modern city, and went on to see Spain proper, starting with Medina del Campo, where I arrived at night in the rain. There was no hotel at the station, at least a mile from the town, and I knew no Spanish. A railway official pointed the direction. I could not find an hotel, so approached a person standing at a doorway. I made signs, pointing to my rain-soaked clothes. He led me to a dark passage and left me. I sat down on my rucksack and, in spite of being very wet, subsided to the floor. No harm in moving into a small dark porch leading off the passage, I thought. All was quiet in that small house. I could not keep awake, and thought I would just doze for a few minutes. I woke in sunlight. Three women were looking down at me. On two trestles stood what looked like a rough coffin. It was a coffin, and a corpse was in it!

I hurriedly gathered up my gear and was outside when one of the women drew me back and gave me a basin of coffee and bread. They seemed poor people, for the floor was mother earth. They refused ten pesetas. So I saluted my way out with a very grateful "Buenas dias", the first Spanish words I had mastered from my sixpenny book of Spanish questions and answers.

In the town itself there were enough subjects to keep me going for a month. I took some pictures of the Arab palace standing out aloof from the town, built of the world's finest brickwork, with graceful arches overhanging battlements and towers. The food was bad, but the coffee delicious. I met a general acting as governor of the district. I saw a procession of mules so thin that the bones of their hind quarters were sticking through their hairless hides. Only by severe walloping could the poor creatures be urged to cross the square, full of pot-holes.

Nice people, the Spaniards, but hard on animals. Unfortu-

nately life was tough for their owners, in many parts still living the lives of serfs. I was glad to get to Madrid again and the clean food and wine. There I met an old friend, Peter Luck, the good-natured movie-tone Frenchman who spoke Spanish. He gave me plenty of picture stories and transport in his sound-truck. He was a bull-fight fan and made me one. We missed none of the terrific fights in Madrid and Seville, where we were made members of the Bull-Fighters' Club.

Peter described bull-fights as the only blood sport in the world in which there are rigid rules for the bull. If the matadors do not obey these rules they are hissed, and sometimes get a shower of cushions and beer-bottles thrown at them. If they do not kill their bull in the twenty minutes allowed, they are put into the "cooler". I have seen one in the prison under the Seville arena.

But this was all by way of waiting for the revolution. As I kept up a steady flow of material to London, no one worried. Peter returned to Paris, so I had to shift for myself. I had the grand idea of doing something no other pressman had ever done in Spain: getting into the Royal Palace in Madrid, the finest I have ever seen. Compared with it Buckingham Palace is just a country mansion. But how it was guarded! I tried all the ordinary methods and several others besides. The King's secretary said a No which meant a thousand times No. The King and Queen and the royal Princes and Princesses would have made such useful pictures, and a good reason for my staying on for months in that lovely climate. Outwardly the monarchy seemed like a rock. But I felt that at any moment the revolution would sweep away all that glamorous Court. It was unthinkable that there was no record of the royal family living in that extraordinary palace.

The more I tried, the more difficult conditions became. Guarding the palace were batteries of artillery, cavalry, infantry and a company of halberdiers, to say nothing of the visible police and secret police and the faithful band of flunkys. Even the garages and stables were heavily guarded, but I kept on trying.

One morning a messenger came from the British Embassy. Luck at last from an unexpected quarter. I was to see the chief councillor at once. The Ambassador was down south. It was a lovely morning for it, I thought, as I pushed my camera

into a taxi. I knew our Embassy and the palace were in close relationship.

I arrived to find the Embassy flooded in morning sunshine. An attendant passed me on to a councillor, who took me right through to the "presence". At the end of the salon, behind a desk covered with documents, a head was bent over a blotter.

I waited, and so did the officials, almost breathlessly. The head kept me some time before it looked up. At last it spoke, slowly, and to the point, as if he were the judge about to sentence a murderer.

"So you are the creature who has been attempting to enter the royal palace. You are the man who would dare to photograph their majesties in these times of difficulties."

After a pause to let the first part of that devastating oration sink in, Mr. Pompous continued. He must have practised it like a piece of broadcast. But I had surfaced now, and said something:

"You mean to say that you have sent for me to tell me that I have no right to enter a foreign palace. You have the nerve to waste my time and this wonderful morning light! What has it got to do with you anyway? Who do you think you are? I sought no help from you, and I want no hindrance from you either."

That solemn figure reared and lost the incisive technique he had first used to flatten me with. Then he gasped out:

"If I hear of you making any more attempts at molesting the royal family I'll have you sent out of the country."

"If Spain is a British colony, then why don't you put it in order?" was my last shot as I passed those officials and clerks who had listened to me getting it in the neck.

Such scenes put murder in my mind. Oh, for a bomb to fling among that smug bunch who had not the sense to feel what was going on around them! How I left that outpost of arrogance I don't know. The sunshine now seemed to mock me. I re-entered my now unnecessary taxi and drove to the first café to swallow a big Spanish brandy—comforting stuff to be taken in a crisis. Under its influence my wrath subsided.

After another brandy I began to think that I should not have uttered such brusque replies to that cloistered official, so unused to back answers. What could he do anyway? Of course he could have me sent out of the country, under the

conditions then prevailing! That shocked me, so, as it was near lunch time, I went into Eladio, the smallest but best restaurant in Madrid—if you can ignore the manners of the regular customers.

It took half a small chicken and two bottles of wine to bring me back to normal. The outlook was black. Think how I would, I could only see a quick end to this enchanted holiday. The worst would be for the revolution to happen and I not on the spot. I had no programme of jobs to do at the moment, so did as Spain does, basked in the sun on the wide pavements sipping Olorosa and nibbling succulent prawns and fresh olives.

Daimler's manager, Herbert Butler, whom I met each day, taught me this technique. He liked discussing the unevenness of things. Some worked very hard. Others just seemed to wish their lives away on the Gran Via. Herbert was very interested in my experience at the Embassy. Had I no friend at court to help me? We were sitting next to Señor del Vayo, with his small circle of revolutionary friends, but it was no use asking him for a way into the palace. As yet they did not know one themselves.

There was one man who could manage something if he had a mind to, said Herbert.

"Berry of the Associated Press has got more pulls than anyone else in Spain," he added. "Let's go and see him after dinner."

We met Mr Berry just as he was leaving his office. After some sherry he took us home to see his wife and family. We talked about all sorts of things. I liked Herbert's methods—not a word yet of the mess I was in. When I had told Berry one or two new ones and made him laugh, he asked if there was anything he could do for me while I was in Spain. I thanked him and said there was nothing he could do. I told him about my efforts to get pictures of the royal family. He surprised us by saying:

"Don't you know that the only way into the palace is through Primo Rivera's office? The King has to take his orders now."

I replied that I could not even get into the Dictator's office.

"Be in my office at nine sharp tomorrow," said Mr Berry, in the tone of a man determined to do something.

Behind that serious face his brain was working like an automatic telephone exchange. As soon as I dialled my trouble,

his mind went running from one contact to another. No man had more contacts, and he knew how to use them. His office was a journalist's club.

At ten to ten next morning I had kept the appointment with him and had been passed to Señor Montesinos, Primo's secretary, and was chatting to the great dictator in the holy of holies, the War Office. Primo was then in the same position as Mussolini. Everything was so easy now I was inside, *behind* the formidable guards at the War Office which Primo never left. He gave me an hour in his operations room with his big maps and documents. I had not wanted that particular material, but it made a good newspaper story, and opened a way into the royal palace fortress.

As I was leaving, Primo asked me if there was anything else he could do for me. I said I had not yet covered the royal family. He called Señor Montesinos and gave him instructions. Berry's plan was working to time. At ten minutes to ten next morning I was in the royal palace with the King greeting me with:

"Good morning, Mr. *Daily Sketch*. How are you, and where shall we have the pictures taken?"

There stood the Ministers and officials glaring at me, while Alfonso treated me like an old friend. I took my best pictures in the King's lavishly decorated workshop, as he called it, a magnificent salon where hung a colossal lustre chandelier. There was no hurry here to do my stuff now the palace publicity policy had been changed overnight. No police nor flunkies to worry me. Only one thing he refused to do: to be taken with his wife and children.

"If you go down that corridor you will find the family waiting for you," said the gay, smiling Alfonso we knew at English social functions, and not the callous King so hated by his people. He shook hands effusively and vanished.

I carried on as directed, over some of the plushiest of carpets, and after turning the corner, came upon a lady whom I guessed to be the Queen. I asked her the way to the Queen's wing.

"I am the Queen," she said, smiling.

"I thought you were one of the Princesses, Your Majesty," I said.

She laughed and led me to a salon where her five children were waiting. My remark got me the rest of the morning with



the Queen. I was sailing along very sweetly now, and selected several poses and positions in the lovely salons, on the grand stairway, with the company of halberdiers, and then went on to the wide balcony to photograph the family looking at the regiment of guards. It was the first time I had seen a palace guarded by batteries of artillery. This all made fine pictures, and the last taken in that wonderful home. The Queen and her family at that moment were a very happy circle, in spite of the shadow of the revolution already creeping towards the palace.

I will dwell no longer on this perfect day. My plates were put on a special plane, and I cabled my story. The editor made a big splash with the stuff, all in the front and double pages and an interview, all made possible by dear old Berry. We celebrated that night, and I swore that if ever I wrote a book and was still honest, I would treat it as theatrical companies do their bills—music by one, lyrics by another, costumes and wigs by someone else, but the production by Mr. Berry, who organised my scoop. I thought what a helpless creature I would have been without friends, for whatever I have tried to do, there was always the Good Friend behind the scenes.

When the *Daily Sketch* arrived in Madrid, I took some copies to the British Embassy about the same time in the morning I had been called there. I sent in my card, marked *very urgent*. I was shown at once right into the would-be dictator's office. He looked up from his blotter while I hurried towards his throne. I showed him the pages of the *Daily Sketch*, first the front, then the big double splash, and lastly the interview on the main page. Who did he think had done this deed? He looked like a man who had seen death.

"And, believe me, the royal family liked it and wanted it. So now, for the sake of Fleet Street, if you cannot help a camera-man please don't hinder him. All these are my very own work by the courtesy of Primo Rivera, King Alfonso and the rest of the royal family. I leave you these newspapers to put into your files," were my last words as I passed out of that hall of gloom.

Now all was well with me again, left to roam freely in Spain, Valencia, Seville, Granada, Jerez, where I drank sherry where it was grown. I look back on that once-in-a-lifetime tour with gratitude to all those who helped me. A few days after this royal scoop my old friend Peter Luck turned up. He took me

with him in his sound-truck to cover several good stories before he was recalled. We spent our evenings trying to get a line on the revolutionaries. From what we heard at the labour meetings and from the syndicalists it seemed certain the revolution was inevitable—just a matter of time. We must be on the spot. We are coming to it, so have patience while I try to trace the crazy track in my memory.

When I knew that the worst of the weather was over in London, I went home for a brief change of everything. During my absence Primo made his bad political *faux pas*—and got the sack: a most unusual thing to happen to a dictator, who generally has to be assassinated. Later still he died, and the few enterprises he started were abandoned, especially his road plans, badly as these were needed.

Keeping in touch with my secret service—dear old Herbert Butler and friends—I gathered that I could not dally any longer in England covering the christenings, comings of age, weddings and funerals. Besides, the weather was very bad again at home. So in due course I returned to Spain, to find it almost as I had left it, except that there were now scores of special correspondents, reporters, camera and ciné men in the hotels. They must surely know something. I resumed acquaintance with the syndicalists, trade unionists and the fraternities, the medical students from Atocha, comparable to our own University Hospital.

I met Señor del Vayo again through Herbert Butler, who was so useful to me now I encouraged him to make more progress with his Spanish. He lived in the sky-scraper Telephone Building in de luxe apartments, where neither the landlady nor the guests could speak any English. How decent and useful to me he was he will never know, for he went under during the Franco trouble. He used to scan the papers for me and miss nothing and follow any useful enquiry to the end.

So near did I judge the crisis to be that I asked Del Vayo to take me with him to see his friends, the shadow Cabinet of Ministers ruthlessly thrown into prison without even a trial. I had a delicate time bribing the warders to let me see Alcalá Zamora, the rebel Prime Minister. Through the cell bars I took several time exposures of the rebels, waiting in constant dread of being shot.

From the prison I went straight to the reigning Prime Minister and his Cabinet—dreadful little Ramonones, and his gang of

confederates, steeped in political intrigue and corruption, so badly advising Alfonso they kept Spain back in the serfdom of the Middle Ages. A nice bunch, smug and well-fed, they looked in their salon, compared with those other faces, pale and desperate, behind the bars. I not only snapped them in groups, I did singles of them, for I felt that all would be assassinated the moment the people were freed. But they all turned out to be good runners.

It seemed strange to me that these Ministers and the King could not already feel the icy breath of the coming tornado. Yet the Press were positive of the approaching revolution. Even then Alfonso had only to make a gesture to save himself and his people. But he would not fire the Cabinet, so they were all fired together.

Although Tom Noble gave me a free hand, he told me to be sure of photographing all places, politicians coming and going, generals, labour leaders and prospective rebels—any personalities likely to come into the story when it broke. I must have taken hundreds of pictures covering all the ground likely to be touched. This is only to show the trouble my old firm took to cover big news stories. Speed, accuracy and exclusiveness were matters of high price.

One morning, to my surprise, I noticed that some of the journalists had departed. Then camera-men began to leave. Barmen began to miss the Press. Then the ciné men drove north in their sound-trucks. This worried me for a moment, as I thought something had broken out elsewhere. I phoned London, and was told that Fleet Street was tired of the story. Ashmead Bartlett told the editor of the *Daily Telegraph* that there would be no revolution. All the papers had the same story except mine. A fortnight later Ashmead Bartlett and Peter Luck were the only remaining pressmen.

One morning Bartlett sent for me as if he were my chief. He told me that he had been commissioned to cover the revolution, which was not coming off, he said.

"Brown, I am leaving Spain now I know nothing is going to happen. Come to the Golf Club with me and take a picture of my friends," he said, in the grand manner of a general giving an order to his trumpeter.

He was a fine-looking man, built on the lines of the Duke of Westminster. Orders from my chief said I was to keep in touch

with him, so I went out to the famous rendezvous some miles from Madrid, where we had lunch. At least, he arranged for mine in the chauffeurs' restaurant, while he joined his aristocratic friends who had convinced him that there would be no revolution in Spain.

Afterwards I photographed that happy band of snobs on the golf course, for you never knew when they might pop up in the news. I was really alarmed when Bartlett said casually that when he cabled his message he was going to tell my editor to recall me, for I would be wasting my time waiting in Spain for any political change. The country was never so settled and peaceful! I told him to do nothing of the kind, for I knew what was going to happen; everyone to his job.

What a state he put me in! The hatches were off now. Even he was stirred out of his complacency. With him was the secretary of a royalist society in London. I told him not to worry about my destiny, for we represented different newspapers. Whatever happened I had to be a genuine eye-witness. If I was in London I could not get together some odd pictures to make up a story. So we argued. When I told him that I could take him to see the future Cabinet, now in jail, he said I amazed him.

Finally I persuaded him to come with Del Vayo to the prison and talk to the shadow Cabinet. I had to give my word that I would not tell anyone he had talked with the rebels. But he came and had a talk with Alcala Zamora. He would not be snapped inside or out, but that did not matter so long as he did not butt into *Daily Sketch* business.

Shortly afterwards he left Madrid. But he had done his deed, for a few days later I received a cable from the office.

"Come back at once, no useful purpose to be served by remaining in Madrid," said the chief.

I re-sealed the envelope and told the porter to put it back in the cable rack while I thought of something. Should I dash off to Seville or even Granada, where things were said to be boiling up? Then I might miss the main story in Madrid!

Next day Herbert Butler took me to the Hotel Nación, where the Atocha students met daily. We spent an hour listening to them planning the revolution. They would first demonstrate in the streets and have a procession as was done in London. In

Spain a group of persons over three was called a crowd and shot! They brought me into the discussion, and were none too polite about some of our institutions.

A number of factors caused my bantering replies which nearly got me beaten up.

"You talk about demonstrating in the streets. You give me a pain in the neck. You are only academic revolutionaries. Last week you were going to burn the King's portrait in Atocha. Then you were going to hoist the red flag over your hospital—ugh, you make me sick! I'm off to Seville, where men are men and shoot at sight anyone who hinders them," were some of my remarks.

Perhaps it was the annoyance at leaving Spain, but it all came out in a mouthful. They jumped up and shook their fists at me.

"Keep that stuff for your tomorrow's revolution; you'll need it," I shouted with as much fervour as theirs.

Herbert turned paler than usual, and I felt none too comfortable. If the usual good-natured intervener had appeared to pour oil on the troubled waters all would have been forgiven. We got away without a fight, and spent the rest of the evening in the Café Gran Via. That night I arranged with Herbert to cover our interests in Madrid, in case I was away in another town in search of the disturbances reported in the British Press. To dodge the recall cable I decided to drive to a few likely towns, while Herbert kept in touch with our office.

"You would be wise to be in Atocha at nine tomorrow, just the same," said Herbert gravely. He knew his Spain.

Exactly at midnight, when I was in bed, those students came to my room on the seventh floor of the Gran Via Hotel.

"We will show you whether we have the guts or not to demonstrate in the streets. You will see that from tomorrow Spain will be free," one said, and they meant it.

"You've done it now," said Herbert, after they had left us. He insisted on my loading all my slides in readiness for a big day's camera work. And he was right.

At eight a.m. I had bathed, dressed, drunk several coffees and was on my way down to Atocha. Everything seemed normal. Students were going in and out of the hospital gateway. I was in the window position on the first floor of a house I had been nursing for weeks. In fact all the windows opposite

the hospital had been booked by ciné and camera-men until they were recalled.

There I stood on that lovely morning, my camera still folded away in its case, the only foreign camera-man in Madrid. Students were now arriving in scores, some entering the building, a few remaining outside. A police chief arrived with a score of constables. They looked like human beetles as they broke up the group of students. Suddenly the huge studded doors were closed. The police chief and his men with long rubber bludgeons were on the outside. He drew his sword, and rattled it across the doors.

"I'll show you rebels if you will demonstrate in the streets like the English," he shouted.

A snooper must have informed on the students, for it was exactly what they had threatened.

As he shouted, large Moorish tiles were hurled down from the cornice of the building. One killed him stone dead. I was only just in time to yank out my camera to photograph his men carrying him away. I looked up to see where the tiles came from. Scores of students were lining the roof parapet and wearing gas masks. Piles of tiles torn from the rafters were in heaps ready to hand. Down came showers of these and brick-ends to demoralise the scores of police now trying to batter down the doors. This was the second good picture.

As the police retreated, the doors were flung open again, and out rushed a hundred students armed with pistols and brick-bats, bashing the police left and right. The wide street of Atocha was theirs . . . the first round of the revolution. They fetched out the painting of King Alfonso and burnt it on a bonfire made of Government proclamations. I got down to the street just as the painting was sizzling like bacon in a frying-pan.

I put two plates on this, and was putting another on the student tying the red flag to the arm of the lamp-post. Suddenly they saw me, and started hurling tiles, brick-ends and large pebbles picked up from the street. I photographed these coming at me through the air.

"Stop it, you fools! I am the *Daily Sketch*," I shouted, thinking that in the confusion they did not know me.

"Yes, we know you from last night, Mr. *Daily Sketch*. Damn you and your newspaper," one shouted.

While they were diverting their attack to me, the police, who had been driven into the narrow passages, came from their cover and started shooting again at the students. I was in No Man's Land. Two bullets tore through the skirt of my heavy brown coat before I got out of the street and back into my safe first-floor window.

What a wonderful fight those students put up! They faced up to the police pistols and bludgeons, and though several were shot and battered, they fought until they had won back their street once more. My pictures show them falling in front of me, still unbeaten. That first pitched battle stands out vividly in my memory.

I called across to the leader of the group I had met the night before, to tell him I was a neutral.

"Are you sorry you insulted my friends?" he said.

"Yes, of course I am. I think you put up a grand show. Let me come down to the street," I asked him.

We were friends again, thank heaven! I dashed off to the bottom of Atocha to get into touch with Herbert Butler, who would connect with the office. Thousands of people were packed between the barricades of police isolating the battlefield. Behind it all was poor old Peter Luck, trying to get through with his sound-truck. Señor del Vayo was having a private fight with the police, but I then had my own worries. I got my plates to safety, phoned Butler, then went back to Atocha, still in possession of the students.

Suddenly came a bugle-call. The crowd groaned. At the top end of Atocha we could see the crowd being ridden down by a squadron of civic Guards, the finest corps in Spain, and the only one unbribeable. Then followed a company of foot guards. We all scattered, the students scurrying through the hospital gateway. I just had time to run up the street to get behind the stronger attacking force. I was still sweating from fear and excitement, so scrambled into a café for a large brandy and rum.

Try as I would, I could not hold my camera still. It took half a bottle of brandy to steady me sufficiently during the close-up firing which followed. The first volley from the civic guards was fired at a student tying a red flag to the flag-staff on the roof of Atocha. He was shot through the hips, slid down the flag-staff, then rolled down the pitched parapet of the stone

gable. He was on his way to crash into the street, but was dragged back into the wide roof gutter.

The rest of the students now retired behind their own thick walls and continued their defence with small pistols, tiles and brickbats. The fight had now started in earnest. The firing from the large mauser rifles crashed out and reverberated against the old walls. I worked my camera in a doorway. As I snapped one civic guard five yards away he crumpled up. My picture of the incident was moved, which gave it a very dramatic effect, and it was published on the front page.

After this incident the gendarmerie did not approach the walls. For two hours they continued to shoot up the hospital. The students tried to get help. They were losing the first battle, but they had been blooded. I took pictures from all angles. Each time the guards tried to rush the doors a shower of tiles sent them scurrying to cover. So much of the ammunition was flung from the roofs that these must have been stripped.

At last a student jumped on to the parapet and waved a white handkerchief, signalling for an armistice. The battle was over. Although the students were physically beaten, the news flashed through the country that at last a group of hardy spirits had stood up to the tyrannical reactionary regime.

I went across to the small street hospital and saw the doctors extract a half-inch bullet from the guard killed as I snapped him. The doctors could not make out what kind of fire-arm could fire such a bullet. The first casualties were few for such an amazing opening of the revolution. I did not stop until I had cabled my story and packed my plates. I had a code arrangement with the chief about sending a plane to meet me at the frontier. Butler was to take these in his Daimler. He was piqued when I took them myself on the night express train. I had waited so long to get these first precious pictures I could not risk the possibility of having them stopped at the frontier. Anything could happen, so I made up two parcels, and sweated with fear as the railway police combed the train for revolutionaries. Not only trains, but all buses and trams carried soldiers fully armed. My luck still held, and I crossed from the tragic Spanish frontier to lovely, peaceful France, where Donovan, in charge of our Paris office, was waiting with his plane.

Even here disaster was lurking round the corner. Our racing



driver revved to ninety miles an hour on the straight road to the aerodrome. Half-way a big dog jumped in front of us. The Basque driver never wavered. There was a sharp jolt. I looked back to see the large carcass drop dead. I could have killed the driver for his callousness, but he only murmured:

“Un pauvre malheureux.”

He explained that it was the dog's life or ours, for if he had diverted the steering a fraction we would not have survived.

I poured a few cognacs into Donovan. The light plane tumbled about in the gusty wind and then made its course for Paris. I could return to Spain for another spell now, for the revolution had begun. The great thing to me was that not only had the revolution started, but that I had the beginning of it on my plates on the way to England. That is the camera-man's main anxiety. You can read reports of battles in the newspapers, streets running with blood, fighting here and there, but when you get there it either never happened or it is all over. Then you dash off to another district where the rebels are blowing up something. All you find to photograph are some charred marks on the wall and not a bit of action.

The day following the Battle of Atocha, after sleeping on the night express, I thought the revolution would continue. Herbert and I drove all over Madrid searching for another battle to snap, but all we saw were some small free fights. There were small attempts outside Madrid, but luckily I was not tempted away from the main chance.

Here, as briefly as I can, I will tell you exactly how I saw a revolution start, develop and come to completion at five yards range. There was no knowing exactly where the next clash would take place. Our student friends had done their stuff, and thought it was up to some other revolutionary section to carry on where they left off. But there was a pause, and those who talked loudest last week were now silent.

The students never faltered. Here is how one of them, the bravest man I have ever met, in spite of lamping by the police and a volley from the civic guard, stirred that city to white heat. To see the revolution in the making was like seeing a new world being created.

Madrid's General Post Office is the finest building of its kind, and is near the War Office at the bottom of the Gran Via. Herbert and I were tracking a student and his friends, listening

to them making short speeches, watching them being beaten down by the police, fighting back and getting away. Then they would be heard of in another part of the city. After many searches, we found the party near the War Office.

Up to now we had no information that anything was likely to happen in or near this staid and colossal post office. Suddenly my friend tugged me round. One of the students—how pale and tense he looked!—scrambled to the roof of a lorry. Another student joined the driver at the wheel. With magnificent and dramatic gestures he shouted to the crowd:

“Your freedom is here for the taking. Don’t be fools any longer. Follow me!”

Herbert translated the words as we scrambled through the excited crowd. The police tried to rush the lorry. They lamped the driver and the student with their wicked rubber bludgeons. Other police took shots at the speaker from the pavements. He stamped on their hands as they tried to grip the top of the lorry. Once he fell—shot, as we thought—then got to his feet again.

The crowd were now so closely packed and excited that the police and soldiers could have picked off that brave figure. How they missed him I don’t know, for there was shooting enough. I believe that this student presented such an heroic figure, blood lining his face from his beatings, that police and soldiery were also touched by his courage.

Then he turned towards the post office, its windows filled with staring faces, his arms outstretched in eloquent appeal. If there was anything divine in a human body it was in his. At least twenty thousand people were now surging in the streets round that tiny figure.

Again he made his appeal, his arms still outstretched heavenwards, his inspired face looking upwards to the hundreds of faces in that great building. *Then the miracle of miracles happened!* Every window opened, and from each fluttered a red flag. The scenes which followed were the most moving it has been my good luck to watch. Even Herbert shed a tear. One policeman tossed his bludgeon up to the student, a symbolic gesture. Post office officials surged from the big doors to embrace the students. All violence stopped. The boy made another speech, and his friends turned the lorry round.

“Come on, let’s get to the Puerta del Sol, where everything

may happen in the next half-hour," shouted Herbert, clearing a way towards his car.

I was taking pictures all the time now. Herbert drove me back to the hotel and left me to reload and return through the back alleys to the revolution, which I prayed would last until it reached Madrid's Trafalgar Square. The side streets were blocked, but by fighting my way one minute and begging my way the next, I got into a first-floor position in the Puerta del Sol. Below me the revolution was hatching out. It was a pressman's paradise—action everywhere. Scores of police were chasing and beating anyone who showed the slightest movement, cheering on any symptoms of revolutionary fervour. And as yet this crowd did not know what had happened at the post office. With the arrival of police of all sorts orders were shouted to clear the square. Their chief appeared and assembled lines of his men to charge the crowds. One man tried to make a speech. A policeman fired his pistol at him, and missed. The man slugged the policeman clean out of his big helmet, which rolled on to the tram-lines for another to kick sky high.

The slugger jumped on to the tram, but was caught and bludgeoned senseless. Fine action picture this, caught just as the bludgeon landed on the man trying to shield himself with his arms. No sooner had the police cleared one space in the square than it was filled by a surging mass from another direction. Below me was a series of human whirlpools. Anything could happen, but no one could predict it.

Could the military, with their machine-guns, cause a panic of that determined crowd? Dare the military massacre them? There was no sign of this yet, for here was no ordinary mob. Although unorganised, those citizens were united in one thing—hatred of continued tyranny. Puerta del Sol is the battlefield where all Spanish revolutions were lost or won. It would take more than a whiff of grapeshot to get that inspired mass under control again.

And still the officials staring down from those Ministry windows did not know what had happened at the post office. Would the reactionaries be able to smother the revolution before it reached the great square? Were they preparing an ambush behind those windows? Were we to see a massacre of those unarmed citizens who merely wanted to be ruled decently? We had

already glimpsed the machine-guns in the doorways, manned in readiness by regular soldiers. Surely they dare not fire on their own families? We would soon know now, as one policeman after another crashed to the ground.

On two sides of the square were the Ministries, and on our side the restaurants, banks and offices. We had safe front seats to see the supreme test. I was holding back my plates for the coming slaughter or celebrations. Next window to mine were some wealthy Spaniards wishing the downfall of the revolutionaries. Waiters from the café below were bringing up wine and refreshments. Although anxiety was in their faces, they settled down to watch death as they watch death in their bull-rings. With the usual Spanish hospitality, they offered me their wine, and I drank it—pints of it. But I was not with them. For the first time, in spite of my job, I was no longer an impartial observer. In a day I had become a rank revolutionary.

In my travels round Spain I had seen how the people were treated, police- and priest-ridden, worse than serfs, often starving in a land of plenty. I had seen homes worse than our pigsties, colonies living in caves, others living in holes in the ground and wearing rough skins. You could hardly recognise them as human beings. King or no king, that struggling mass were determined to achieve the ordinary freedom enjoyed by Englishmen—freedom to elect their own parliament, freedom of speech and Press.

Alfonso could have given all this in a gesture, but at that vital moment he was away on one of his too-frequent holidays, surrounded by a flattering Court. He ought to have seen this crowd incognito, so often did he travel incognito for his pleasures. If ever a king lacked a friend and adviser, it was Alfonso. I remember one symbolic palace ceremony I had photographed. Keeping up an old Spanish custom once a year, the King washed the feet of peasants at the foot of the throne. He could not even do this properly. From a simple and beautiful ceremony the occasion had become a mere perfunctory gesture, hardly worth a photograph.

I was thinking of this while we waited anxiously for the next phase. My thoughts battled backwards and forwards as I remembered being told how the swarms of officials had battened on the people. I could not help but compare the troubles of

the people of Spain and our own settled way of living at home.

How I was wishing for these people to get their freedom this very day! Dear old Peter Luck had been waiting for this day, not merely to get his sound and movies. At that moment he was in French Morocco, sent by his chief to cover military manoeuvres!

The party in the next window had now become savages, the bloodthirsty spectators of the bull-ring. They were now waiting for the kill—other people's blood. Where was the army, they shouted? Where were the mounted civic guards who had smashed the students of Atocha? These were the grand people who could see horses gored and their insides being dragged about the ring and laugh when the same horses were stitched up and put into another fight later in the programme. They could watch those poor old horses, their vocal cords severed, so that they could not scream when gored. These people were wishing a massacre. I was wishing the opposite, trying to keep my mind on my job, to record whatever happened below.

We watched the struggle swirl first this way and then that. For a moment there would be order, and then another current would surge in from another street. All drives were still under control. Any efforts made towards the Ministries were brutally smashed. What a beating up those hardy spirits took! And they could take it! But how those bludgeons smashed into the flesh!

*Where was the little hero of the lorry?* Only he could save the day for the people. Was he dead and his legions dispersed? I endured acute suspense while I waited with that party of aristocrats. If he did not reach the Puerta del Sol in time this wonderful crowd would be tired like the bulls by those mounted matadors with the blunt-pointed spears, to make an easier kill for the torero. Spaniards are like Italians, who can soar easily to the top note, but cannot sustain it. And the reactionaries knew this. Better to tire this crowd while they let off steam, and avoid a massacre. Once those machine-guns were fired it would mean civil war to the death. So the gunners held their fire.

Oh, if that boy were still on his lorry! Any moment now we might expect the artillery, sending shells from a side street. As yet only the police and the gendarmerie were holding those

thousands jammed into the square. The Ministries were defended and barricaded by civic guards and militia with the machine-guns. But still they held their fire.

Then suddenly those thousands of men, soldiery and police, heard a roar round the corner, like the roar of a bull-ring. That great mass turned together and stared at something out of our sight. For a moment they were transfixed, as if they glimpsed something divine. Then we, too, could see what held them: a tiny raft moving within that whirlpool of humanity! Riding on it was a Holy Week figure come to life, our hero of the post office, still on the lorry. Then came a crescendo of cheers from the upturned faces, swelling to the volume of Niagara. Honest emotion swept the crowds, the officials and the rest of us. The devotion in their upturned faces was only equalled by the million crowd at the Eucharistic Congress in Phoenix Park gazing at the giant altar, or the closely packed masses of chronic invalids at Lourdes, looking expectantly towards the Grotto Shrine.

The gap between my neighbours and myself was forgotten. All were held as we watched that advance guard pressing relentlessly into *Puerta del Sol*, like the lava from an erupting volcano. No, thank heaven, nothing could stop them now. The fervour of that heroic figure seized *Puerta del Sol* as it had seized the *Prada*.

The officials peered from behind their windows. No use shooting at Niagara or Vesuvius now. God must have taken a hand that day. No more violence now. The flood-gates were opened and the pent-up emotion released as all gazed upon that divine figure, in truth their saviour. Some wept, some sang. Soldiers, police and citizens embraced each other, while others more soberly shook hands.

While the excitement was at its height the second miracle of that great day was performed. First one and then another of the windows of the old Ministries were opened. A tiny red flag was seen fluttering on a piece of string. That must have been the signal, for from every window came red flags, until the old buildings took on the appearance of Red Square. As those symbolic signs appeared so vanished the tyrants, for they could not be found when the crowds surged through the doorways.

Here was no organised revolution, but a spontaneous rising of the people.

As I watched the red flags now appearing in the most unexpected places, I wondered where these could have come from at such short notice, for only a few minutes before the debacle it was a crime to own one. I took a few more pictures, and then noticed the crowd forming into a procession—the first in Madrid. I hurriedly took another drink with the party in my window and said good-bye, for all were now friends. I worked my way to the head of the singing crowd, and was told that they were going to the prison to release Alcala Zamora and his shadow Cabinet.

As we passed through the streets, people peered from their windows, afraid of what might be happening. We soon reached the prison, and the great doors were opened to reveal the shadow Cabinet waiting to be welcomed by Señor del Vayo and his friends. One small man took a run and leapt at Zamora and embraced him. Nor would he let go, his legs clinging round the Prime Minister's waist. While he kissed him on both cheeks, I had time to take several pictures. Señor del Vayo embraced his old fighting colleagues and relieved his pent-up feelings after their years of bitter underground struggles.

Herbert was waiting at the hotel to tell me that the King was returning that evening. I sent off loads of plates and a long cable covering the incidents of the great day. All services were functioning as usual, but now in a very happy atmosphere. Everyone could smile again. The waiters sang at their job and took wine with us at our "red feast". Much wine was drunk by those abstemious Spaniards. What police remained in view drank to the future of Spain with anybody who would pay for the wine.

After dinner we went to meet the King and his suite at the station below the palace. As he stepped from the train I let off a tiny flash, for his nerves would be none too good when he had heard all the day's news. There was no crowd to greet him now, and only the Court *claque* mustered up a faint cheer between them. They winced as the flash went off. They looked a comic group of parasites as they stood forlorn, no longer with a background of police and public. For once the fawning railway officials were absent.

Even a camera-man must try to be impartial, although I had seen too much of the sufferings of the poverty-stricken people of Spain to feel much sympathy for those responsible. The

King listened for the Court *claque*, always in attendance, but there came only a few bleating cries from the loyal Lord Chamberlain and his Court lambs.

What a pathetic figure the King now looked—paler than ever, his glamour gone, as I waved my hand to him. He returned the salute and seemed grateful for that sole friendly gesture. That no other camera-men met him was the surest sign that even his official "popularity" had vanished in a day. He had returned to ride out the storm. Perhaps he thought of his future sanctuary as he saw that the only one outside the Court circle present who gave him any sort of a greeting was an Englishman.

The "secret" police, in their black clothes and hats, still hanging on to their jobs, stood out conspicuously against an empty background. They now wore the same forlorn look as the palace lackeys. In a day their arrogance and offensiveness had left them drooping, wondering what the night might bring.

From the moment that the students gave a lead to the people King Alfonso and his Cabinet of tyrants had suddenly become men of no importance. As a revolution there could be none other like it. The old Ministers just faded out, and the new Government established itself automatically with more bruises than blood-spilling. At first the King refused to abdicate, and thought a reshuffle of that pack of thieving monsters could save the situation. But he did not know his own Spaniards, now freedom conscious. He still insisted on the municipal elections, which in any other country merely put into office ordinary citizens to manage local affairs. By an extraordinary working of the wards the occasion was made a "Yes" or "No" for the King, who thought that by the usual crooked wangle of working the open ballot he could still command a national "Yes" for himself.

But he had left it all too late. The Court continued to hope for the best, even after the Ramonones crowd of Cabinet Ministers and their tools had vanished.

My good friend Berry said that the first Madrid elections were announced for next day in the suburbs. Herbert and I got on the job early. The voting booth was just an ordinary house. At nine o'clock thousands of people had assembled in that suburban street, not to vote, but to hear the result of the first votes for or against the King! Inside the ballot booth



were the tellers and other officials—tough guys, standing round a glass casket shaped like a coffin. There was nothing secret about this system—everything was open and above board, and heaven help anyone who dared to do anything but what he was told.

Even now, with all that had happened against the tyrannical Government, surely no one dare vote against the glamorous Alfonso the Thirteenth! That is what all the officials of the old regime thought as they fought like cats to hold their jobs. It was a clever move on the King's part, and might have succeeded earlier, if it was only the Government which the people were sick of. But they had had enough of their "beloved" King too. Citizens spat when they passed the different businesses he had a hand in. It was just a gamble.

So there we were in the voting booth waiting for the first elector. Imagine the voters of a Hammersmith municipal ward voting for or against a king in Buckingham Palace. That is the parallel. The officials permitted me to snap the first voter. He was a poorly dressed priest. *Then the third miracle happened.* As I shaped up the priest for a photo, one official handed him a paper in the manner of a superior giving a menial his orders. The priest refused the paper and said:

"Give me the other colour—the people's colour."

"What! You want to vote against the King?" asked the teller.

"Yes, I do; and then we may get food and clothes to replace these rags," said the priest, looking down at his weather-beaten garb, his hands outstretched.

The officials were staggered when the priest took another paper, folded it and dropped it into the glass casket. The flutter of that folded paper was the end of Alfonso the Arrogant. The news was flashed to every part of Spain. Then the queue came in to vote in the same way. The police and civic guards looked at the orderly crowd, stupefied that all could be against the King! Nobody wanted Alfonso or his corrupt officials. Even some of the aristocracy voted against him. He had challenged a decision. He got it peaceably, but conclusively.

The new Prime Minister sent a messenger to the palace announcing the news. Still the King, told to abdicate, hung on and tried to compromise with the new Government, who finally told him to clear out at once. We waited at the front

of the palace for the last view of him, but Alfonso took one glance down at the thousands of upturned faces sullenly waiting for the final chapter. Then he made a quiet get-away. When it was announced that the King had really departed, the great mass dissolved and went quietly to their homes.

There was little more I wanted now. I certainly did not want to trouble the Queen and her children more than I could help. I snapped her next day at Escorial saying good-bye to her friends.

Of all the pictures I secured in Spain, the one appreciated most shows her majesty receiving her retainers and peasants for the last time, by the roadside—the last on Spanish soil. This picture was selected by Stanley Bishop as the finest taken during the Spanish revolution, and it was also selected as the finest photograph of the year.

Here is a confession. *I did not take it.* To this day I don't know who did. I only know that it arrived in my name, like scores of others from local agents I had asked to cover for me, in case I was unlucky. This is the first chance I have had of publicly confessing, and I hope I shall yet meet the man who took it.

I cleared up my affairs and gave a party to the friends who had helped me. It was a large one. Then I got in the Queen's special train for France. I took pictures of the Queen and her children saying farewell to the people at the stopping places, but nothing can touch that lovely roadside picture which shows her blessing the old ladies. The pathos and drama move you to tears, for the Queen was a kindly lady, and had no enemies in Spain. We were a sad trainload as we crossed the French frontier. Months later, when I again saw that lovely land of mystery, her people were achieving peaceful prosperity. What memories flowed back when I read of that brave nation plunging into civil war! As I read of the ancient towns being blasted, my chief asked me to cover that terrible phase. I was tied to a hotel. Leslie Foxall, our barman artist, known to thousands as "Carlos", volunteered to fight. He had hiked and painted north, south, east and west in hospitable Spain, the artist's paradise. I tried to bribe him off his adventure. We received one letter written before he fought his first battle. He met one shell, and no trace of him was found. No such frail body ever held a finer spirit.

Another friend was George Bonsor, a wealthy artist living half the year in his Carmona villa studio, painting exquisite oils, and the other half in England as a country gentleman. He showed me a Roman arena with a centre lift-shaft for water spectacles, gladiators' footmarks chiselled in the arena sills, Roman tombs with urns of incinerated aristocrats still neatly shelved. He guided me to Moorish mosques whose walls were clothed with mosaics of pin-point fineness; to lovely Granada with her lath-and-plaster magnificence; on through dust-swept Mercia, flying windmills of huge canvas sails; to the underground town where rich orange-growers carve their homes in the chalky earth; to Barcelona, a futuristic city of queer edifices with wavy eaves, leaning walls and a cathedral indescribable. I climbed a stone stairway which had no visible means of support. In Escorial I found an unsupported stone floor high over the main hall rising and falling with the rhythmic motion of a suspension bridge. What a land of beauty, dazzling contrasts, exquisite colour and, above all, kindness and hospitality. No wonder Carlos thought Spain and her people worth fighting and dying for! My job done, I went on to Paris and home. That is my angle of the most curious revolution I have ever seen.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### KING ZOG OF ALBANIA

THE MOST DIFFICULT PLACE to enter is a palace, with perhaps one exception, the Royal Yacht Squadron at Cowes. Even millionaire Sir Thomas Lipton, with all his wealth, patriotism and sportsmanship, could not achieve his ambition until it was too late for him to enjoy the honour. He spent a fortune in trying to regain the America Cup and also to enter the famous club. Yet tea can get anywhere—into the humblest cottage and the most exclusive palace. He welcomed us in his *Shamrock*, and we were given special attention on account of our publicity value.

I like interviewing royalties as much from curiosity as anything else, for they were not always news. Wherever I happened to be I did two things first. One was to climb to the highest point of the city, be it the Fire Tower in Constantinople, Seville Cathedral, New York, Chicago or San Francisco. From the highest point I got a sight of the physical side of the city. It seemed to take the lid off and give me a general view of my problems. The other was to get inside the nearest royal residence to see how the residents lived.

King Zog's palace at Tirana, although the smallest, was the toughest crib to crack in this line. Here I may as well give you a glimpse of Albania, the most backward, in our sense, of European countries and one of the most interesting. I found several things here. The first was, although Mussolini was getting a strangle-hold on the country's banking, army and navy, a British gendarmerie administered a subtle control over the people. I also met some unforgettable characters.

On my way out I had planned to call at Malta for two days. The exquisite beauty of the island, the inexhaustible source of pictures and stories, and the hospitality of Mabel and Roger Strickland, who grow the sweetest oranges, caused me to stay for six weeks. Even then it was a struggle to get away from the many friends who made that working visit a perfect holiday.

I covered Sicily and Southern Italy, but did not linger long

among the Fascisti, who did not smooth the path of a pressman. Most things were there, but I had stayed so long in Malta I had to hurry on to Bari to get a steamer to Durazzo, where the hulls of the ships churn up the mud of the harbour.

That short crossing gave me a wonderful contrast: Italy, with her ultra-modern civilisation marred temporarily by Mussolini, and Albania, the most backward country in Europe. So primitive in some districts were the people, their business was done by barter. And this is what happened as soon as I landed at Durazzo, in a colourful, biblical scene.

I walked round like one in a dream. It was only eight o'clock in the morning. Primitive but beautifully coloured carpets hung on the walls, pottery of all the shapes you see in old pictures, millions of leeks—yes, I mean millions—and the natives dressed as if ready to play in a wonderful pageant. I was wondering where to start on this massed opportunity for pictures when I heard a very loud voice with a pronounced Oxford accent talking to a party of girl tourists.

I got out of its hearing, for it jarred the calm of that lovely morning atmosphere. I sauntered on into the town.

There were few modern buildings. An Italian pointed out the best, and told me the British Minister lived in it. Durazzo was not the capital of Albania, but perhaps Ministers also had summer palaces. As the day was already glorious with sunlight, I knocked on the door. I had been seen, for out came the Minister, Sir Robert Hodgson. He greeted my cheery good-morning with a glare.

"What do you want?" he said very curtly.

Like a fool, I carried my camera, slung on my shoulder, for you never know the moment you may need it in strange lands. He could not take his eyes off it. I told him who I was and asked him if he could tell me if any special passes were needed in Albania.

"What, at this time of the day?" he almost shouted.

I just grinned and wandered off. More about Sir Robert later, who became one hundred per cent when he invited me to the first decent meal in Albania. Judged by our standards, the food was dreadful. The only thing one could safely eat, after skimming the crust of dust from the top, was *coz*, a sheep's curd, and this only after a bottle of red wine had dulled your fastidiousness.

An Italian sidled up to tell me he owned a motor-car, could speak English and knew where I could get good coffee. He led up to the journey to Tirana. How was I to make it except in his car? When he showed it to me it did not look as if it could be driven another yard. We settled about the price, and after we had driven back to the waterside to take some pictures of that gay bazaar and its merchants, we went towards Tirana. What a jolting I got! The road was full of holes. I covered the twenty miles half standing and leaning, for it was like taking one's first ride in a mule-cart.

When we got to Tirana I forgot my soreness, for the city was still unspoilt, although the Italians at that moment were demolishing the beautiful old mosques. Almost as fast as the old ones were pulled down the Albanian Moslems built others on the edge of the city. Durazzo was wonderful, but the market square at Tirana was even better, a welter of vari-coloured merchandise, a vista of untidy beauty. Here were mountaineers and their wives in their gaily-coloured clothes—almost uniform, for all wore the same design. The women carried huge cradles on their backs as they came down from the mountains, spinning their wools on hand spinning-wheels as they trudged along, burdened also with a bundle of sticks to barter for leeks—of which I have never seen so many—grim determination on their swarthy faces. From what I saw of the women from the mountains they seemed to be used as mere beasts of burden, for the men carried nothing.

These peasants and mountaineers were the first people I have met who seemed able to get on without money, for all the goods I saw change hands were in kind. Their money, Napoleons and leks, seems to be used for hoarding in their mountains homes safe from town robbers. This quaint bazaar of thousands of illiterate people was controlled by no officials, police nor auctioneers. For a bundle of leeks you could get graceful pottery and brass-ware and hand-made coffee-grinders.

Later in the day I found that there was a governing class of officials, some slick politicians already telling these mountaineers that they must pay taxes. Naturally they wanted to know why, for they themselves were quite independent of the new so-called civilisation creeping into the towns.

This independent spirit caused the death of three Americans. An agent had sold wireless sets in the mountain villages. As

long as the batteries lasted, the sets were a great success. No provision had been made for replacements, so the Albanians thought they had been swindled. As no satisfaction was forthcoming, a conference was held, and with loaded rifles a shooting party went down the Scutari-Tirana road. They recognised the American flag on the bonnet of a car, and shot the three passengers, but spared the Albanian driver. At the trial their defence was quite straightforward. They had been sold something for their savings of gold, something which would not work. They had been robbed, so robbers had to die for their compatriots' crimes. That is still their code.

As I said, the husband, with his striped Skanda Beg trousers and beautifully braided tunic, carried nothing. He was the protector, I was told, and now he was not allowed to carry a gun, he carried a stick. How those poor women struggled and sweated with their huge cradles and market goods, in spite of their great strength!

My guide took me to the Hotel Internationale, where I was never immune from the Italian secret police. Before I asked any questions I took a good look round, and saw that although the Albanians still had a superficial freedom, they were already in the hands of Mussolini. I packed my camera and luggage in the wardrobe. Although I locked it, I found on my return that my papers and oddments had been well gone over. This did not matter so much if they left my stock of unexposed plates alone.

At the publicity office, run by some American-trained Albanians, I heard of an American Foundation Station in the district to deal with malaria and other diseases. I parted with my shifty-looking chauffeur, who wanted to nurse me for the duration of my stay. So closely did he cling I had to prise him off like a barnacle. He held too many whispered conversations with some Al-Capone-featured creatures. When I shook him off he muttered that I would be sorry that I had dispensed with my bodyguard.

The mosques claimed my first attention. Here were real Turks at the fountains washing themselves ready for prayer. I peered in at a door of the main mosque. Just one step did I take inside before I was hustled out again. I turned away from the blazing sun to catch sight of a magnificent-looking man, at least six feet six in height, wearing a gorgeous uniform.

Though the uniform was foreign, surely that easy carriage was English! I followed the figure at a distance to a building where it vanished. Then came a cheery-faced officer in a similar but plainer uniform. I gambled a breezy good-morning, and got at first a glare, then a step towards me with a smile.

"Come and have a drink," is my usual opening remark to a soldier. It was Captain Hill of the Albanian Gendarmerie, run by British ex-officers. Over some coffee and *raki* he told me all about it. While we chatted we were approached by a walking kitchen. An old fezed Turk unslung a stove on legs and cooked us delicious morsels of meat and fish on skewers. Then Captain Hill introduced me to his chief, General Sir Jocelyn Percy of Great War fame, now in command of the Albanian Gendarmerie.

I arranged to photograph his men in their mountain posts. Hill put me in touch with an American-speaking Albanian, a schoolmaster who had been trained to try to civilise his compatriots! At the publicity bureau I found a very bright but mysterious circle organised by the Italians. Several were Mussolini's agents, but they made me think of Al Capone's bodyguard. Their effusive insincerity warned me not to expect much help from them. So I did not mention my main project, the palace and King Zog, a fighting king who at seventeen was a colonel in the Austrian army, member of Parliament at twenty-one, Prime Minister at twenty-four and is still chief of the Mati Tribe.

I had heard a lot about this mysterious personality. Several things I heard that day made me think of Tirana as a whirlpool of politics. I became very circumspect. The man who gave me much useful information was Snowden Hedley, the first man to take part in air warfare for the Bulgars against the Turks in 1912. For this he received the Order of Brava. I called him "Flit" right from the start, not only because he was selling the stuff, but because he was the chief vermin-killer in the Balkans. He was the Balkan high-pressure salesman for Standard Oil Products, and the only Englishman who could speak all the Balkan languages. No matter where you went there was always a tin of his stuff. His other antidote for the infections of the country was gin. After dinner at the Hotel Internationale we had got well into his second bottle when I heard that loud Oxford voice again. I saw the owner in the hall and told "Flit" where



I had heard him. He thought we should let him into the circle. He was a handsome chap with long, untidy hair, and wore plus fours for all occasions. He turned out to be a wealthy poet, Brian Waters, who wrote "The Dragon Fly", and good company in spite of this. "Flit" fetched out bottle after bottle of Square-Face Gin, until even the Italians got tired of looking at him. Then we all went to bed and the fleas.

I made my plans for the second day, and was about to start out to cover the Gendarmerie, showing them guarding the winding mountain passes and training of the rank and file, when Brian Waters appeared and said he wanted to come with me. I said I had serious work to do and had no time for poets in day-time. He badly wanted to come, and offered all sorts of inducements, including the carrying of all gear, no matter where I had to go. I accepted his offer, and he became my unpaid bodyguard and carrier for months.

From the very start we were watched and hindered by the Italians, who resented our presence there. My first official progress was being allowed to photograph the Cabinet after a Member of Parliament had shot King Zog in the arm during a session. So trifling was the incident to them it was not even a newspaper story. In fact, while the members were ducking under the seats, Zog called them to continue the session in spite of his wound. His arm was bandaged and the session continued. I became all the more keen to interview a King who could take attempted assassination so lightly.

So Brian and I went to the Parliament House to photograph the Cabinet and Prime Minister by flashlight, as the hall was very dark. The doors were guarded by men armed to the teeth. Brian held the flash-lamp, and the camera was on the tripod. I posed them in session and blew off the flash. The explosion which followed opened every door as if on magic hinges! In rushed the armed guards, ready to strike down any more assassins. The Prime Minister waved them back, but they were not easily persuaded that our mission was one of peace.

I took another picture, while they watched me closely. I was afraid their guns would go off by accident, they were so alert. We finished our job and departed. We snapped other personalities who, I thought, if we flattered them sufficiently, would help us into the palace. I even photographed the German

general borrowed by Mussolini to train the Albanian army, and also the German Minister, whose huge swastika outside the Legation could be seen for miles. Even the American Minister could not help me, although his country was spending millions of dollars to abolish disease in Albania.

So we carried on, while I got a lot of attention from the secret police. Never a day passed but they went through my belongings and opened my letters. So close became this attention I asked Brian Waters, Captain Hill and a few others to come to my room and see for themselves. I locked my stuff in the large wardrobe and placed the tiniest pieces of paper on the tops of the doors. Then we went down to the outdoor café some distance away, but within view of the hotel all the time. We gave them an hour, and then returned to the room, to find that the wardrobe had been unlocked and my stuff gone over as usual.

Captain Hill took us along to the police station. The chief of police raved at us in very good English. Did I accuse him of molesting an Englishman? and so on. If it was not his men, then who was it? I asked. We had a long argument, and finally it ended in a surprise wine-party in his large office, and we finished the discussion at dinner in the evening. My chief fear, I told him, was that the snoopers might ruin my stock of unexposed plates, of which I could carry only a very limited supply.

He became friendly enough to show me several good subjects for pictures, but the palace was out of the reach of everybody, he said. Not even the Italians had taken pictures of the King, he added. Not even? I queried. Why should Italians have priority over me, a British subject?

The Albanians are first-class footballers, taught by their masters, the Italians. There were some good scraps during and after some of the games, so all matches are played behind a high barrier of barbed wire and armed guards, to prevent the spectators joining in. Foreign winning teams were decorated with garlands of flowers, as in the South Sea Islands. The pitch was hard and grassless, which gave the players tremendous speed at which to manipulate the light ball. English crowds are very quiet compared with the Albanians, who seemed to go mad in voice and gestures. At times you would think they were about to murder each other.

Brian Waters failed me only once. I was invited to a levee at the Town Hall, Tirana. We had no idea of the sort of function it would be when we passed through the very ordinary doorway. It could not be much, we thought, in this tiny, backward country. As we put our coats in the cloakroom we glimpsed the guests in the main hall. Every country was represented in full Court regalia. There was Sir Robert Hodgson with the American, Italian and German Ministers standing in a detached group from the crowd of other Ministers, making up a glittering, gaily coloured pageant not surpassed in Buckingham Palace.

Although it was the smallest country in Europe, with a population which could neither read nor write, still it must have a representative from all the others—Ministers, Consuls and the usual assortment of diplomatic staffs. How the Albanians would have stared at that assembly! Just at this time their new Government were applying pressure methods to extract heavy taxes from them. The peasants could not see what they got for their money. They should have seen that fancy-dress carnival, which staggered even my poet, Brian Waters, for as soon as he saw the show he bolted! I dashed after him, and managed to cut him off at the doorway. I swore at him and threatened him with extermination if he did not come back. He wailed because he had only one suit, plus fours. "It isn't done, it isn't done," he repeated.

The guests heard the scuffle in the corridor. When we entered the main hall those three hundred guests had become as rigid as wax-works. So still were they I put a time exposure on them and then a robust flashlight to animate them. We snapped Sir Robert and his friends, for they made a fine show against the crowd of cunning little officials in their comic costumes.

The Albanian Ministers especially were in their glory, for only a few years before this they were ordinary bread-and-butter folk. Even the King was still chief of the Mati Tribe and prospective victim of the blood feud. That is why Zog was never seen in public. Nor was he present at the levee which he had given.

Outside the Italian official circles we did very well, and were invited to several ancient monasteries. This meant great feasts to be eaten without table-tools, so we did as the

rest did, took the bones in our fingers and gnawed off the meat.

The fat, hearty priests were generous, and egged us on to bursting point. The wine was good and plentiful. After each dish they blew off tremendous belches and expected us to do the same. But this needed practice. Close by was Kruja, the old capital of Albania, a city of dreams. You could imagine the twelve apostles waiting here for their Master. The natives worked at old crafts with the tools of a thousand years ago and took not the slightest notice of us. They were easy to photograph, for they lived in a world of their own and did not know what was happening.

I made progress towards the palace when I wrote an article for the official monthly paper to save a Roman bridge just outside Tirana. There was to be a new road made, and the bridge was to be demolished. I suggested that it should be by-passed and left as a national monument. My translated article saved the bridge.

Wherever I tried to find a way into that palace there was always an Italian to block me. I was getting good stuff otherwise, but my time was limited. Sir Robert Hodgson refused any help. I went on to Scutari to find fresh stories, and met an English lady who reminded me of Nurse Cavell. She had given her life to nursing the Albanians, building houses and clinics and trying to teach them the rudiments of health. The death rate among the babies was terrible—eighty per cent—for the mothers persisted in keeping them in suffocating blankets and cradles even in the hottest of weather. The babies who do survive the first year have to be tough. I returned with Miss Pennington to her home, for which the Albanian Government provided her with an armed guard. We went out to the tribes she tended to take a series of pictures. She showed me some dreadful disease-ridden colonies almost beyond hope. How gentle she was when treating the sick, not always too grateful, and taking her services for granted.

Making one last effort to get into that carefully guarded palace, I photographed the Italian Minister. But he knew I was only doing it as a gesture on the way to the palace, for he held the key. The Italians were stone-walling me quite openly now, and did not hide their resentment.

I was meditating on this one evening at Thompson's restaurant and trying to stomach the usual gritty food, when luck came and sat right at my table. A very charming, elderly Albanian came to my table and spoke perfect English. He had spent many years in England, he said, as Minister. His name was Mehemet Konitza. I gathered that he did not like the Italians so swiftly getting control of most things, even the one and only bank, where you had to suffer a morning of insolence before they condescended to cash a cheque. The Italians were trying to get by graft and cunning what they could not get by honest fighting, he added.

I led the conversation round to my chances of an interview with King Zog. If I wanted an audience with the King he would arrange it at once! Thinking the interview was hopeless, Brian Waters had gone into the mountains.

Three days later Mehemet Konitza told me the time and day the King could give me an audience. I was collected by Dr. Cherko, the Home Office public relations officer, driven to the palace and handed over to his Excellency Ekrem Libokova, Minister to the Court, very pro-Italian, and Mussolini's chief Quisling. How he loathed the British, especially after turning me down several times!

Of all the kings I have met, reigning or resting, in spite of the circumstances, King Zog seemed the happiest. I had a great surprise to find him not in the least "foreign". He *was* really tall, dark, handsome and intelligent, well groomed and dressed in West End clothes. He was easy to meet, and told me about his mother, his guardian angel, whose painting was over his desk. He continued chatting all the time I was taking pictures, quite smoothly and without interruption from the score of officials peering at us through glass doors. It was just like covering an ordinary film star, and in a way he resembled Adolphe Menjou when he was younger.

Royalties can be dull people. They are kept like queen bees, apart from their tribe, and have nothing original to say. It is sometimes a job to make them talk. I have often had to say something for them and ask them if they agree with it. I tried to induce Zog to say something about his relations with Mussolini, the people and improvements in their standards, for there was a lot of talk of this when the money was being squeezed

from them. Politics had no interest for Zog. I took all the pictures I wanted in and outside the palace, including the King's wild cat Mussolini in the grounds, a perpetually ferocious brute.

As I had had so much to put up with from the Italians every time I had tried to photograph even a bit of the Albanian army, I asked the King's permission. Yes, he would arrange a special day for me to do all sections and also a review. The army would be mine for a whole day, said the King, so I could show those Wops who was boss for once. Luckily I had learnt the most important word in the Albanian language, "Tungiatieta", which simply means "May you enjoy a long life"—no empty wish among Albanians, with their sudden fits of temper, and where assassins go unpunished. The King laughed as I retired in good order, all my gadgets in my hands.

Next day all the troops in and around the city were called to manoeuvres under the command of the Italian generals. What a day I gave them at the saluting base specially erected for me! I had the comic-opera cadets march past me eight times, the Italian instructors sweating profusely in the burning sun. They wore real white spats. My pictures show the Italians, taking the salute for everything. No matter what the subject, even at the end of the manoeuvres ground, they had to come and stand at the saluting base to finish off the picture. Then I made them take me into the hills to photograph the mountain artillery carried by mules. Drill and minor features brought us to lunch-time.

My two friends, "Flit" and Brian, took me off to a good lunch, after which I returned to ask the Italians why the royal standard had been lowered. Did they not know that the occasion was a royal command performance?

It all seems very trifling now, but I was determined to see if the King had any authority left. The daily annoyances come back fresh to my mind as I turn over my Albanian pictures and think of my trouble in circumventing those wily Wops, already in league with the Germans hatching out the great European plot. The presence of General Sir Jocelyn Percy and his staff of British ex-officers in charge of the Albanian Gendarmerie made the Italians believe that the British Foreign Office was alive to the growing political menace, and also that we were determined to do something about it.

Several times King Zog had been told by Mussolini to sack

the General and his staff, but he refused, saying that he wanted some gentlemen he could trust in the country. But we were not so awake as was supposed. Before this war Mussolini successfully cleared out all British influence.

After I had covered the various units of the Albanian Army I asked permission to cover the Albanian Navy, not knowing if there was one. This was granted, and I only had to report to the chief of the Albanian Admiralty at Durazzo. The Admiralty building resembled in size and shape one of these Martello towers built on our south coast to resist Napoleon. The Italian officer in charge was a good sort, and gave me a friendly reception. As the Navy consisted of two small motor boats only, I could photograph only half of it at a time, while standing on the other half. I took the job seriously and snapped the naval cadets being lectured. There was even a radio and signalling station. The Italians in charge of the Albanian Admiralty gave me a very good day, and were quite different from the army officers. One officer told me that he had been attached to the British Navy, which explained a lot.

While waiting to get into the palace I had tried to be present at a performance of Dancing Dervishes who had a mosque in Tirana. My friend Captain Hill now arranged it and made up a small party to accept the invitation from the Mohammedan friars. We saw all sorts of quaint things in the mosque—spikes, whips, drums and bells, and some beautiful old scrolls of real gold writing. Some of these objects were two thousand years old.

The proceedings started very quietly with a faint drum-beat rhythm which did not vary except in volume and tempo during the whole of that exciting session, lasting two hours. It took ten minutes to rev up the dance to a tremendous crescendo, the dervishers stamping about the room until they were one whirling mass of arms and legs. One dancer detached himself from the crowd and in a fine frenzy pierced his cheeks with a skewer. Then another one followed, still wilder, and stuck a dagger into his stomach. I cannot swear that the long thin weapon went right into his inside, but he winced sharply as he hammered in the ivory handle with his fist.

The session finished up in a wild orgy of emotion and a final yell before they stopped suddenly, breathless. They made no

collection, and without more ado packed away their instruments and weapons and departed.

Next day I saw another curious sight. A peasant in heavy leg-irons, escorted by two armed gendarmes, was dragging his way along the main road towards Tirana prison. It was explained to me that his offence arose out of the blood feud.

Adultery, like stealing, is a rare crime in Albania and earns the death penalty, for the woman only! This peasant was the husband of an unfaithful wife seduced by a chieftain. Her brother, who sold her to the husband in the first place, fashioned the bullet, and together they went to the woman tending sheep in the valley. She knew what was coming to her and faced up to it. The husband shot her.

This is where the gendarmerie comes in, to try to stamp out the centuries-old blood feud. The prison conditions were bad—more than a hundred crowded into one large barn. Still, it was difficult to interfere with Albania's unwritten laws, which make adultery and robbery such rare crimes. Those people were a law unto themselves and seemed to live happily and strictly to their code. They did not want to be civilised by us or the Italians, an invading tribe of brigands, and prayed for the day when they would have strength enough to turn them out.

We have thousands of books of written law. One tiny book of Albanian law might put many of our police and solicitors out of business. A burglar would think twice about smashing his way into another man's house if he knew he risked certain death. And as for the habitual seducer, the penalty would certainly cool his ardour. One Albanian asked me why we hang only murderers. I am no reformer, but it might be worth the experiment to shoot all pickpockets, house-breakers, blackmailers, share-swindlers, black-marketeers just for three months. If not this, then what are we going to do about the tremendous increase of robbery of all sorts? Ask the insurance companies.

When Brian Waters came down from the mountains and heard that I had seen the King, the army on manoeuvres, and the Dancing Dervishers he also did a dance and swore like a trooper. It cost a bottle of gin to get him back to normal. Having covered everything in the district, Brian asked me to go with him to see some surgical operations on Albanian peasants



in the Italian military hospital. This was about the only good thing brought to Albania from across the Adriatic. We watched a surgeon remove a cataract as simply as cutting tonsils.

We had a shock after this when he showed us hundreds of what looked like misshapen birds' eggs, ranging from two and a half inches long down to tiny pebbles. He was about to take another of these stones from the bladder of a patient. There were enough of these hard white pebbles to pave a pathway. Although the Italians were none too gentle with their patients, who made willing subjects for the medical experiments, the operations were performed under first-class conditions and the equipment was right up to date. The operating-room was perfectly lighted by daylight and artificial lighting. The surgeon told us that no other nation suffered more than these mountain peasants from stone, caused by the water. In some districts these large stones had jagged edges, which made the owners all the more ready to part with them. I noticed that although they took their treatment well, they had to be strapped down and gagged.

Miss Pennington told me that unless something was done about the infantile mortality and syphilis, the Albanian population was in danger of extermination. Only she and a few English friends made any attempt to deal with the two scourges. She showed me some of the sufferers in dreadful condition. Hygiene was unknown in that ancient country. Even when having a baby, the poor woman was sometimes chased out to the woods to bring it into the world unaided.

Just outside Tirana I saw the young Albanian army in camp. I also saw the army brothel, a rough shack where some dreadful, disease-ridden women entertained the soldiers. It seems to be nobody's business that these young men should be damned from the start from sheer ignorance, getting the worst of two codes.

The Americans were doing a wonderful work on a big scale exterminating mosquitoes by drying up swamps. I saw first-class laboratories staffed by doctors, and well-organised expeditions to the districts where malaria was rife. It was also American money which educated those very smart Albanians whose natural bent was always to politics after they had acquired the gift of the gab.

The political situation was much too deep for me, so I decided

to continue my roving commission. Sir Robert Hodgson gave us a very good party, perhaps relieved to see our backs, so also did General Percy. Brian Waters went south, "Flit" went west to do some more flea-killing and I went due north to Montenegro.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### KING ALEXANDER—QUEEN MARIE INVITES ME TO STAY AT HER SUMMER PALACE—DUBROVNIK PRISON

WHEN QUEEN MARIE OF YUGOSLAVIA was a young princess she came to England with her mother, Queen Marie of Roumania, and stayed at the Ritz Hotel. The Prince of Wales was to visit her there, and I was sent to do the pictures. I was shown into a salon to wait, and was just sizing up the background, the abundance of flowers, mirrors and side-lighting, when suddenly the door opened and the Princess came straight to me and shook both hands warmly.

Someone had shown her into the wrong room. I wondered why she was so charmingly chatty. Then she caught sight of the camera and burst into girlish laughter. The Minister escort nearly collapsed. Some one had blundered. I got my pictures and departed. Both the Princess and her mother were particularly charming and helpful after this incident.

I will skip a few years. Come back with me to the Albanian frontier, from which I crossed into Montenegro to continue my roving commission. I took all sorts of queer pictures on my way towards Belgrade; here I wanted to see King Alexander, who had never been interviewed or photographed in his palace. For a month I tried to get into that palace, How that place was guarded! I was about to give up, for the boss did not know my plans nor what I missed. Already I had a king or two in the bag, King Zog among them, so what did it matter? While I was trying to enter the palace I was getting rich picturesque stuff with no trouble or opposition. After I had sent off each parcel of plates I would return to the Hotel Excelsior, and gaze at the palace opposite, trying to wish my way inside.

Every time I tried a new method the officials and guards blocked me. Even Terence Atherton tried hard, but failed, and he could get almost anything in Belgrade, where he had founded the *South Slav Herald* in English. He was once with me on Allied Newspapers. In between running his newspaper he showed me Serbia by night and by day. I did not know what real Serbian food and music were like until he took me to some extraordinary places off the tourist's beaten track.

Terence suggested that I go round and see Sir Nevile Henderson. Knowing our officials abroad, I thought this a hopeless errand. The first unusual thing about Sir Nevile was that he was in his legation and that he would see me. The butler took me into a long salon with lovely deep windows giving on to a palm courtyard. Nice place to work, I thought, as I caught sight of Sir Nevile behind a very large desk at the far end. I stated my case, and he very soon opened up the usual official resistance.

"No, certainly not. The *Daily Sketch*! Good God, no! I would not let even the *Times* get near the King," he said, and with vigour.

This was only a sample of the rest he gave me. When I saw the stone wall I was up against I encouraged him to have a good blow-off. I mentioned mildly that it looked as if some one had been before me.

"Many pressmen have been to Yugoslavia and have completely misrepresented this wonderful nation, now rebuilding their old Serbian empire," he added.

So hopeless seemed the prospect at that moment that I dropped the subject and tried to think out something to cope with his mood. I gaped round the room at the exquisite furniture and then up at the collection of tusks, antlers and other hunting relics on the walls. How could I get this man calmed down and rational? How a man could be angry sitting in that wonderful room beat me? He was behaving right up to standard for British officials with the idea they are officially responsible for keeping British pressmen, especially cameramen, from meeting any foreign subject, especially a king.

While I was trying to think of something, I still gaped with affected admiration at the hunting relics gathered by our overworked Minister. I selected the best pair.

"What a wonderful set of tusks!" I said, with all the awe and deference I could muster.

It was a lucky shot, for Sir Nevile softened at once. I mentioned his job and how exacting it must be under the present special difficulties. He agreed and conversation flowed more easily, gradually coming back to the King.

"Yes, Brown, only last year I got those while hunting with the King. I admit they are fine specimens," said Sir Nevile, very pleased.

I mustered all the enthusiasm I could and went over the

specimens with him. He gave me details about various kinds of hunting, which I followed with more or less intelligent remarks. This continued for about half an hour. Suddenly he turned round to me, inspired by my none-too-cheerful face, and said:

"Look here, Brown, I suppose it means a dreadful disappointment to you coming all this way and then not being able to do your job?"

Did I hear aright? I registered more dejection and just murmured:

"Yes, Sir Neville, this is the worst blow I have had since I got into the Press game."

He was impressed and touched. He looked at me very thoughtfully. I had to let him think that I had come all this way from London to interview King Alexander. He got up from his desk and came close to me.

"Look here, can I trust you? Mind you, I promise nothing, but if I could depend on your word of honour not to write anything against the King and his wonderful people, I might do something. He thinks the world is against him. We will see when I meet the King tonight," he said confidentially.

How could I convince him? I told him the story of meeting the Queen in London when she was Princess Marie and in the shadows being mistaken for the Prince of Wales. Thank heaven he laughed at last! I said enough to convince him that I was a super sympathiser of Yugoslavia.

"I shall be dining with the King tonight, and I may have a chance of asking permission for you to see him. Be in your hotel at midnight, so that I can reach you if anything can be done."

I never worry on a job, no matter how hopeless, but I was at the end of that phone long before midnight. Right on the stroke Sir Neville came through.

"Brown, I've done it. Don't let me down. The Legation car will be along for you at eight sharp. Have your camera ready and for heaven's sake don't keep the King waiting," said Sir Neville.

Terence Atherton was as pleased as if he had got permission for himself, for he had never seen the King at home. I slept little, and was waiting on the steps of the hotel as the Legation Rolls zoomed up, complete with Union Jack on the bonnet.

Away we drove into the country to the Summer Palace at Dedigne, passing between the guard of honour which always greets the Legation car. They must be expecting a distinguished person, I thought. My reception at the palace was grand. I was not allowed to lift my camera and tripod and was helped from the car as a King would be. I was directed deferentially to a salon and given coffee and long, crested cigarettes.

General Voucouvitch, director of the household, entertained me for half an hour before I was escorted to the King's office—a large, well-lighted salon lined with books and decorated with masses of flowers. I had met him fourteen years before at the Peace Conference—a quiet, serious Prince, watching the shaping of the new Europe. He had seen frontiers bent and abolished, and at that time no one knew who would be the new monarchs. Little did we think that Alexander would emerge from that drastic reshuffling of frontiers and dynasties from being the regent of a minor Balkan State of three million surviving Serbs to be the monarch of a nation of South Slavs reunited after centuries of bitter suppression under Turkey and Austria.

When King Alexander saw me he rose from his desk to give me a crushing handshake. I was soon being interviewed. What did I think of Yugoslavia and the people? Had I received good treatment since my arrival from Albania? were the first questions. On the King's desk was a batch of *Daily Sketches*, the top one showing a big picture of King Zog and his palace, my last story in Albania.

King Alexander was a fast worker, and began to arrange my pictures for me. A dozen plates were quickly exposed. Outside in the corridor I glimpsed a queue of officials with documents and despatch-cases. When I began to fold up the tripod the King said there was no hurry. He wanted a special picture taken in the grounds. It was raining hard, but that made no odds to him. He waved aside the umbrellas offered by his retainers and strode outside.

He took me to the best angle from which to get a general view. I put him in the foreground, and he said he must be right in the background, as he wanted the columns of his colonnade to show up unobstructed. As the rain came down faster General Voucouvitch hurried out with our hats. We took some more pictures of the cloistered court, which reminded me of an Andalusian patio. The King seemed glad to have a

stranger to talk to, especially when I told him a few stories in German, which we spoke all the time, as he knew no English. I tried to get him started in French, but he soon dropped back to German.

The group of officials could not understand why the King was laughing so much. When he returned to the office I noticed a pile of documents on his desk.

"You are in for a busy morning, Sire," I said, expecting him to break up the party.

But he was still interested in my camera and me, so we went on chatting. Although I had got all the pictures I needed and plenty of notes, I stayed as long as the King was interested. He kept me nearly all morning!

So I put over a new idea for kings: I asked him if it were true that he started his duties at six in the morning and sometimes went on working until the following morning? Yes, it was true sometimes, for now monarchs had to work very hard and had duties as responsible as managing directors. "Yes, running a nation's affairs is certainly a big business these days," he added. Then I put across my idea.

"Well, your majesty, since all other workers seem to be so well provided for as regards pay, hours and conditions, don't you think that the time has come for the remaining monarchs to form their own trade union?" I said.

The king's serious expression broke up into a charming smile and he laughed heartily. I went on to say:

"Then a union of kings might bring about the peace of Europe, perhaps even the peace of the world, since it is no longer kings who do the sabre-rattling."

Then followed a silence while his majesty thought of Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin and Dollfuss, who were at that moment causing him day and night headaches. I told him not to take the project too seriously. He answered that times were very serious and one must always be thinking. He went on to give me some ideas of modern kingship.

"Modern kingship is no longer a symbol—robes, ceremonies, parades and privileges. True, the King is still supposed to be the most privileged person in the State, but it is the privilege of service to the people, of all classes and factions, though momentarily urged to false excitements. I regard my office as

a tribunal above all self-interest and personal ambitions from which must emanate pure rigid justice. For a king to do right to all, that is the problem, for he, too, is only a man with human frailties."

There was another half-hour of this refreshing talk from King Alexander, from which the *Daily Sketch* printed the longest interview ever published in a picture paper. If I had not promised Sir Nevile Henderson, I could have stayed at the palace all day, for talking to the King was talking to a good, honest commoner asking for news of the outside world. As Sir Nevile had put me in right with the royal family, I very gently left the King where I had found him, in his flower-bedecked office.

I had the send-off of a monarch, and certainly no one could have felt more like a king at that moment. I had got all I wanted. Funny, I thought, the kind of achievements which give different people different thrills. Whatever the dictators might achieve, none of them could feel happier than a pressman with a bag of pictures and an oversize interview. And this was only the beginning, for listen to what happened precisely at midnight, after I had cabled my interview.

I was just about to join Terence Atherton in a night restaurant when the phone bell rang. "General Voucouvitch calling," said the voice. Queen Marie invited Mr. Percy Brown to the Summer Palace at Lisanj, Novi Vinodol. We had had a few bottles of Tiger Milk earlier in the evening, so I thought Terence and his friends were pulling my leg. I went down to the Russian restaurant, where he was waiting for me. He could not believe the news, but told me to be sure and get to the station just the same. We made a night of it, and at eight-forty-five I was at the station, to find a crowd struggling to get into the packed trains.

As I appeared, two giant Serbs came forward and took my baggage and camera from the taxi-man. There was to be no struggle for me, for the crowd parted like cut corn. I was escorted right through the station to a reserved compartment. So attentive were my companions on that journey that I wondered if they had mistaken me for some distinguished visitor whom they had mislaid. They spoke no language I could understand.

It was a good journey right up over the mountains and along



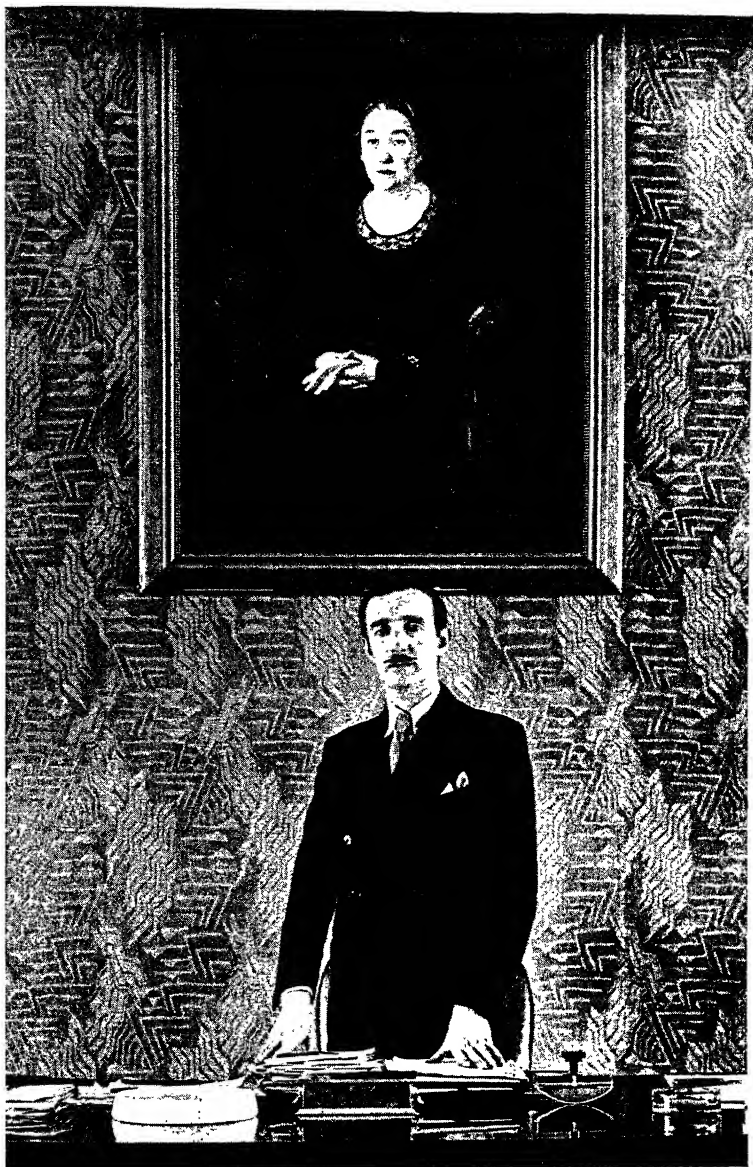
the blue Adriatic. By the time we had arrived at the mountain station I had got into the skin of a plutocrat. Every wish was anticipated. I enjoyed the delicious dishes on that train. Once only did I nearly forget myself. At the mountain station I tried to carry my own luggage. The royal servants raised their eyebrows at me and waved away the railway porters. They escorted me to a long black car, beside which stood a uniformed chauffeur executing a perfect bow.

Although it was summer by the sea, it was winter up there, and a storm of sleet and rain sent the passengers scurrying to shelter down the mountain-side. My escort again seized my bags, while the other passengers stared at me as I walked out under the world's largest umbrella. They were drenched, but not a spot must fall on me, the *Daily Sketch*. They packed me and my bags snugly into the big black Packard, which glided off silently down the mountain towards the palace on the coast. I did not inspect the guard of honour, but there it was for me had I wanted to.

The Summer Palace was right on the sea-shore, well screened from the road by walls and trees. I was received by Colonel Dusan Stoyanovitch, His Majesty's aide-de-camp, and Captain Kosta Grubesvitch, Captain of the King's yachts and ordnance officer. Luckily both spoke English. A few words of welcome, a little refreshment, and they showed me to my suite. I was late for lunch, but the chef was waiting to cook me a meal, which was ready by the time I had washed. With it came a bottle of *Mouton Rothchild*.

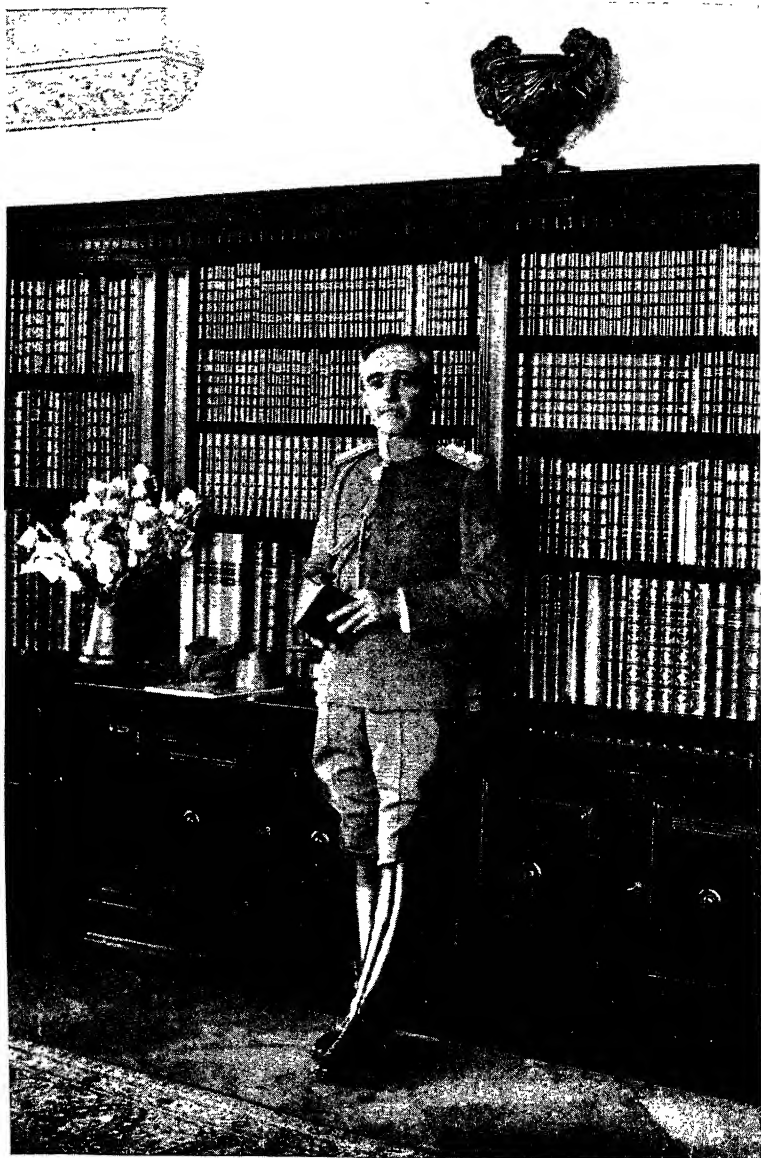
By now I had banished that dreadful doubt that I might still have been mistaken for royalty in ordinary clothes. Until bed-time I was afraid of waking up, for we dined off gold plate and again drank *Mouton Rothchild*. That is how the holiday started, and this standard of excellence was sustained right through the week. The Queen had thoughtfully arranged for me to be entertained by her equerries for two days before I met her and the three boy princes, who lived in the suite opposite mine.

On the first morning I woke at five a.m. So soundly and refreshingly had I slept that I had forgotten where I was. Never have I sensed such tranquillity—not a sound of train, car, tram, or humming airplane. Just the perfect peace one dreams about



KING ZOG OF ALBANIA IN HIS TIRANA PALACE.

His guardian angel, as he termed his mother, is shown in the painting above him.



THE LAST PICTURE TAKEN OF KING ALEXANDER OF YUGOSLAVIA BEFORE HIS ASSASSINATION, SHOWS HIM IN THE LIBRARY OF HIS SUMMER PALACE AT DEDIGNE NEAR BELGRADE.

but rarely attains. The rays of the rising sun shone straight into my room.

At seven o'clock came the most delicate knock on my door. The bath was ready, said a valet with bowed head and feet very close together. Breakfast would be at eight, he said. Below I met the Colonel, the Captain and the officer of the guard and the Crown Prince's professor. We ate an English breakfast cooked and served at its best. The effortless etiquette and perfect manners of my companions I shall never forget.

I was always first. They never moved until I moved. Afterwards we walked about the grounds and smoked cigarettes specially made for us. We sauntered down to the Queen's private beach and dallied in the glorious sunshine. So wonderful was it all, and so readily had I fitted into my new skin, that I had forgotten the purpose of my visit. I must get some pictures and material for an interview.

I brought my mind back to everyday affairs, which now seemed far away. There was no hurry, I was assured, when I enquired about the Queen's health. On the third day a servitor brought a message. The Queen would like to see me during the morning. While we chatted in the adjutant's office, the Queen went past the door, followed by the three Princes and the governess, loaded with all the beach equipment for the day—toys, tremendous rubber balls, bathing costumes, books and dressing-gowns.

I waited until the party had settled under the awning in the royal enclosure and then made my entrance. In manner and gesture Queen Marie was just the same as when I first met her after the war. After a chat I found that she specialised in her whole-time occupation: motherhood. Her children were her work and her pleasure. She used no beautifiers, and I don't believe she owned a powder-puff.

After a most charming greeting the Queen introduced me to Peter, Tommy and Andy. Peter, the present King, was then nine, Tommy six, and Andy five years of age. I need not have worried about the pictures I would take. Peter decided the morning's programme. He said we would do some ordinary stuff on the beach first. Of course Mummy would be in these. Then, he added quietly to me, we would go motor-boating and fishing, if that was all right with me. This was his exact phrase-

ology. He went on to say that he would show me something I had never seen before. And he did.

We finished off the ordinary stuff, as he put it, and from the landing-stage we stepped into his large motor-boat, the sailors giving us a real seaman's salute. The captain put on full speed and Peter took the wheel. We were soon near the fishing-grounds round the Isle of St. Martin. He called my attention to two tremendous poles like yachting masts bolted together and fixed into the solid rock. On the top was perched a man like a sealer, looking out for tunny. This tremendous ladder was hanging over the sea at a dangerous angle.

Peter explained that when the tunny travel in shoals in a one-way traffic past the island, even following the jagged coast indentations, the look-out man can see them from a long distance in the crystal-clear water. We had not long to wait. He signalled his colleagues on land and in the waiting boats to make ready for the catch. Peter positioned his men, and at a signal the watcher on the ladder hurled large stones at the fish. The huge tunny, like living torpedoes, just panicked and rushed right into the nets. The rest was merely a matter of closing the great net and hauling in the harvest. Peter took a hand in this himself, although it looked to me a dangerous operation, with the trapped fish lashing furiously as they were drawn ashore.

The curious thing about the boys was that no one seemed to care how they tumbled about and no one touched them or shepherded them. Most royal children I have seen are watched and nursed from the moment they open their eyes. These boys had perfect freedom, and used it. At that moment life was a tremendous lark to them, and being royal princes was just incidental.

Next day the Queen told me exactly how she brought up the Princes when I had remarked how strange it seemed to me to see them carrying out their own expeditions practically alone.

"I want my boys to learn to rough it very early so that they will grow up prepared to face anything. I don't believe in teaching them until they are Peter's age. And then not too much. He alone has a professor. I want them to acquire tough bodies when they are young, for there is plenty of time to learn lessons afterwards. Of course from the time they leave the

cradle they live in an atmosphere of languages, which they pick up without tears, as it were. I allow no one to pamper or fuss them. I am very strict with them about telling the plain, blunt truth—no white or diplomatic lies,” said the Queen very earnestly.

“Whatever mischief they get into—and they get into plenty—they come straight to me and tell everything. And so they will grow up unafraid of telling the truth. A naval officer teaches them to swim and all about boats, and I am very satisfied with their progress. They are treated just the same as any other boys.”

The Princes were certainly very fit and strong for their age. They talked to me as if they were already grown up. Two governesses looked after their minor matters, with the Queen in the background. She went on to tell me more of her methods.

“I encourage them to work out their own problems, even if it is only untying a piece of string. There are no don'ts in my treatment. If I see them tackling something in the wrong way I let them carry on, and then they find out where they are wrong. I am particular about them not over-eating. I never talk to them as babies, but beings fully responsible for their own actions. And although they don't live sheltered lives, I keep my eye on them when they don't know it. Hypocrites are made when young children are encouraged to show a good side to company, and when alone they relax to something quite different.”

I suggested that the Queen should write a book on bringing up children. She smiled and continued her theme.

“There are a few more vital points. A child should never be bored. By tactful handling I make them cultivate the enquiring mind. They watch people do things. I see that their days are full of interest. I make them do one thing at a time and finish it completely before drifting off aimlessly to do nothing in particular. Although there are always servants within call, they must clear up their things when they have done with them. Tidiness must be cultivated very early on, then later it becomes a habit, and not a hardship. This tidiness is a quality which will help them to solve their problems while growing up.”

Her Majesty walked over to the children, for Peter seemed to be organising something for his brothers.

"You may have noticed that Peter does not play like other children. There must be something at the end of it, that is why he likes bossing his brothers during their expeditions. You would be surprised what he knows about photography, for he has his own dark room. He watched a ciné photographer, so we had to buy a machine for him, and now he knows how much of a scene he can get on his film, how to focus and just where to stand. Perhaps these are signs of leadership which he will need later."

Then I understood why Peter had bossed me about during the tunny-fishing and the motor-boating. He really did know something about angles of photography and the limitations of the camera. Yes, it was certainly an object lesson to me, not only meeting the Princes, but hearing the Queen's views on learning to live.

Several days passed smoothly, and as there seemed no date set for the end of my stay, reluctantly I made one myself. That lovely life was too good to leave, but I wrenched myself away. My leave-taking was as touching as my reception, and all turned out to see me off. When I think of that palace in the evening sun it should have letters of gold in silhouette, HOSPITALITY. The Packard flew me along to the station, where a train was waiting to take me on to Susach, which the Italians annexed and renamed Fiume. I was soon to come to earth from my Adriatic paradise.

I never saw Terence Atherton again. As all the world knows, when the Germans invaded Yugoslavia he made a miraculous escape from Belgrade and joined up in Egypt to become Major Atherton. This morning's newspaper briefly states that he was killed in action.

## DUBROVNIK PRISON

Before I leave this wonderful country I must tell of one tiny incident which brought back my prison days. Dubrovnik is one of the world's finest walled cities, and as intact today as when it was built. The huge walls and battlements are complete to a stone. Inside those walls your motor-car is not allowed. Time stands still as you wander down the main street of stone slabs, lovely old buildings with not a discord anywhere, reaching

right away to the cathedral and the Adriatic, which you glimpse through a fine arch under the ancient town hall, with its great clock, which tells you no time.

I was meditating in one of the picturesque alleys. I stood on the angle facing another old building with stone mouldings, wondering which way I should take. A piece of looped string was coming slowly down the angle moulding. My eyes followed it up to a closely barred window. The string moved agitatingly. Close to the bars a face was pressed, making desperate grimaces to me with its eyes and mouth.

This must be the town prison, and here was a convict thinking I was a confederate! Two fingers went to his lips to make a pretence of smoking. He wanted a cigarette, for the smoke from mine must have tickled his nostrils. Fancy being mixed up with prison-smuggling, I thought. I hurried back to the main street and wandered to the water-side under the arched tower. I gazed across the multitude of small craft, then back to the wonderful old clock.

The crystal-clear air made the boats stand out in pin-sharp silhouette against the lovely land- and sea-scapes. What a wonderful idea, I thought, that no one but pedestrians and pigeons should enjoy the perfect calm and peace of that cloistered city. Avignon and Carcassonne had charmed me, but this enchanted me. Then I wandered into the cool cathedral square, where hundreds of pigeons were being fed by visitors. What freedom they enjoyed, I thought, as I tried to banish that convict's face from my mind. Not even a cage held them. My own memories of prison life flooded back. Had I not done much worse than this poor devil was doing? Had I not bribed the German guards and warders wholesale?

I bought a large packet of cigarettes and a box of matches and went back to the alley to wait until the coast was clear. The eyes behind the bars now watched me closely, but no move was made to lower the string. How I remember doing the same thing and getting caught and being put into dark cells for a month! This poor devil probably thought I had gone to inform on him, to trap him.

I had to hang about for a long time before the string again came down very cautiously. I tied the matches and cigarettes in the loop of the string and up it went. Never have I seen anyone



so grateful as that happy convict as he shook hands together and waved me an excited farewell.

So when the war is over, you travellers, there may still be convicts in that old prison with the beautiful mouldings and so easy to find near the water's edge. Please spare some cigarettes, for you may be in the same position yourself some day.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### SOCIETY ON THE RIVIERA—COWES, PRESSMAN'S PLAYGROUND— A DAY OFF

ANOTHER SUCCULENT PORTION OF life's pie was served to me during a record Riviera season. As the society papers say, everybody who was anybody was there—Winston Churchill, Lord Birkenhead and other Cabinet Ministers. The Duke of Connaught headed the royalties. Most of the top-flight tennis-players, and many who were not, were also there. Millionaires had their yachts by the score anchored in the cosy little harbours. Authors and playwrights, headed by Sir Philip and stately Lady Gibbs, and scores of journalists were there.

In fact, being the perfect democrat, I regarded the whole chromatic scale of society and wealth as being there just for my pleasure. Here was the world's playground filled by the world's playboys. Talk about a succulent pie! When I started from my hotel in the morning, life was more like a bowl of *bouillabaisse*—that wonderful soup made of many fish of all sorts and colours.

When I dipped into the crowd I never knew what I had caught—sometimes big and sometimes little ones, and they all had their flavour.

The first thing I did on a tour like this was to select a hotel, a base from which to cover the whole Riviera and get back in the evening. I had so many invitations to stay free it was sometimes difficult to choose one's home. The matter was settled when M. Fleuri, the most famous of all hoteliers, invited me to stay in his Hotel de Paris, Monte Carlo. He has put me up when he has had to refuse millionaires—a severe test of hospitality. Funny thing, in England most people blench with embarrassment at the sight of a camera. On the Continent they rush to entertain you, with your camera. They visualise pages and pages of free publicity for their country. Your host may house, wine and dine you free, although you may take all your pictures in another hotel.

And their hospitality is of the all-in variety. No niggling about giving you a staff room, or room with *petit déjeuner*, but

the best room available, and all meals and wine at a well-positioned table, so that you can see everyone who dines. The manager takes you into his office to share his best champagne as an aperitif. He gives you an inventory of the big and little fishes then swimming lazily about the place, and asks your choice for the first pictures. Coming from the manager himself, the fishes are flattered and the job of Press-photography is made as easy as tickling salmon.

All this goes for the Swiss hoteliers too, especially the big five in St. Moritz and three in Davos. Hotel de Paris was not only the best hotel, but was the handiest for my job, for it is the centre of the Riviera pleasure-points. A subterranean passage takes you straight into the casino on rainy days.

One other place where the food was equal to the Hotel de Paris was the Restaurant des Ambassadeurs at the Hotel Metropole, also Monte Carlo. Sir Francis Towle had taken this over and also the Hotel Bristol at Beaulieu. He knew he was up against the toughest of competition and went all out on the food and wine, even to installing old-fashioned jacks to roast sheep, pigs and poultry.

I shall never forget one of Cantelope's side dishes of *hors d'oeuvres les oignons Escoffier*. By some special trick of cooking none of the smell was left in the tiny onions, half braised and then evenly grilled in wine under a faint covering of a powdered pink spice. The weekly gala night here was not only a dancing festival under the most perfect conditions, but was also a gourmet's paradise.

Apart from the private hospitality given me there was also the *Société d'Initiative*, who threw special parties for the Press. If you suggested a good picture subject, no matter the distance—say winter sports in the mountains behind Nice—they would not only provide special transport, but also hotel accommodation. The result was that all English newspapers, society papers and magazines published pictures of the Riviera. Even the London *Times* sent photographers to Switzerland and the South of France to cover the social events.

No matter how much writing there might be about the various resorts, a good picture told the story at a glance. Lord Northcliffe's remark that a Press-photograph was worth a thousand words was particularly true of holiday pictures. And the French knew this too. They spent millions of francs to encourage the

Press to discover new resorts. And we did it under their guidance and hospitality.

The firm paid the expenses just the same, for we tipped generously, but had to have something to gamble with. The staff were my information bureau, for no one of importance could arrive or depart without my knowing it. Cook's men, porters and waiters gave me the names of this or that film star, Cabinet Minister, royalty or any others of that strange band who let the world know they are going to have a secret holiday on the Côte d'Or. They would also let us know when a famous man was bringing his mistress and not his wife. We held off him then, for the worst disaster which can happen to a Press-photographer is to have his pictures taken to court for divorce evidence.

No French reception clerk has ever been known to ask a couple of clients if they are married. I have had several cases, especially at the races, where some big noise has asked for immunity. I have had to scrap some lovely pictures when told the reason. Then I do it all over again without the reason—generally the most beautiful woman in the group. This reminds me of another side. Invitations from lonely, beautiful mistresses waiting for their *souteneurs* come in all sorts of ways. You use them for models in stunt pictures.

Naturally my first pictures were usually taken at the hotel I stayed in. M. Fleuri sorted out fifteen different nationalities on his staff. I snapped them on the front steps being given instructions from the great manager on how to receive guests. I did this so often it became a stock picture. It was always a winner for the front page on a slack day, when London was socially "empty". The rest of the nine millions do not count, or so think the society papers.

What a welcome I got from English society! They were natural and just themselves in that glorious climate. When I opened my camera they jockeyed for position on the plate. Here is the difference between working abroad and in England.

In London, for instance, Commander Ramsay became engaged to beautiful Princess Patricia, the Duke of Connaught's daughter. Art editors were tearing their hair because they could not get a picture of the prospective commoner son-in-law and the royal father-in-law. I was landed with the job. For days I and scores of others lurked about the palace waiting for the Duke to

take his prospective son-in-law on his daily walk. Not a hope. The Duke glared down at us from his windows. He would not come out while we were about. So I waited until the other camera-men were taken off the job.

There was one stubborn chap left, Bert Muggeridge, then of the *Evening News*, glued to the side door of Marlborough House opposite St. James' Palace. As soon as the Commander and the Duke came to the door they would double back like hares. So I made a pact with Bert. As there were only two of us, and not in competition, I suggested that we should get right away from the palace, watch from a distance until the Duke and Commander Ramsay, thinking that the coast was clear of pressmen, took their walk past St. James' Palace into the Park and round to the left to come out of the big gates near Buckingham Palace. Once out in the open country, the hares could not run to cover before we had "shot" them.

This came off, and we sighted the two striding along with a care-free air. Bert was straining on the lead, but I managed to keep him still until the right moment. The couple marched through the gates with the sun in the eyes. We both clicked together, and got a lovely picture. Did the Duke create? Never was he so furious.

"Blast those photographers!" he shouted, diving for his handkerchief to cover his face.

But the deed was done. We could have cheered him for that good honest outburst. He was about to double back with the Commander when I hurried forward to say that he would not be bothered again. He stopped and remembered the scores of other pressmen who had been on the job. What did we want to photograph him for? he asked. Because he belonged to the people, who wanted to see his picture. This did not displease him.

"Please continue your walk, Sir, for you will not be troubled again," I said.

The Duke turned towards us and put his handkerchief away. We raised our hats with more than a continental sweep. As we walked away we called out "Good-day, Sir", and the Duke replied in a friendlier tone, "Good day", and we entered our covering taxi. The last we saw of them was striding past Buckingham Palace unnoticed by half a dozen photographers waiting for an investiture.

Now back to the Riviera, and the difference. After taking the picture of M. Fleuri and his international team I drove to the Duke of Connaught's villa. I would not have troubled had it not been for the fact that Tim Console, Northcliffe's star photographer, was already on the Riviera. If I did not make a clean up of the best people before Tim covered them, it was hopeless afterwards.

I saw Major Levett, the Duke's equerry—a gentleman, even when dealing with Press-photographers. He would see the Duke about it. While I was waiting for the grand old man, I wondered what sort of a reception I should get. I need not have worried, for the Duke made things easy by coming out himself and greeting me with a handshake! Of course he would like to be photographed by the *Daily* and *London Graphics*. He himself led me into his garden and showed me the shrubbery and trees, and was very anxious that I should see his new summer-house.

He had bought some old pictures in the village and made a good subject hanging them. I also photographed him pruning trees, weeding, and all the other stock positions in a garden. It was a very pleasant afternoon. They gave me a nice English tea, and as I was passing out the butler gave me half a glass of old cognac. And thank heaven the editor made a wonderful spread of the pictures in all our papers.

This is not the finish of the incident. At that time the Café de Paris was *really* the Café de Paris—the rendezvous of the élite. I could finish my day's pictures in about half an hour, unless I was playing tennis in the morning, and dancing with the élite in the afternoon.

A few days after I had snapped the Duke I saw him in the Café de Paris. He beckoned me over to his table and greeted me like a good-natured neighbour. Had I seen his photographs? he asked. He was as happy as a school-boy. The art editor had selected the best print I had taken at the Villa to superimpose on a lovely picture of the Prince and Princess of Monaco under one of the casino arches.

Society stared as it drifted past, while the Duke pointed out the various picture poses he had suggested. Again I had tea with him, his own natural self.

When I made to move, Major Levett asked me if I were in a hurry, so I stayed to the end, and together we sauntered out

to the square, discussing how soon I could have a set of special enlargements from London. Yes, life is very uneven, I thought, as I turned towards the casino to have my regular flutter on *zero-deux-trois*, which, if I stuck to it, always made me the day's expenses. Ever afterwards the Duke of Connaught was one of my most willing and helpful subjects.

Now—a little deflation. One of my dancing partners was beautiful Margery Stevens, one of Archie de Courville's leading ladies in "Whirligig", produced at the London Hippodrome. When this wonderful show arrived at Beausoleil it became "Faites vos Jeux". Over the invisible French frontier a few hundred yards away a French count had built a new casino in competition with Camille Blanche's great enterprise. It was doomed before it started, in spite of the lovely musical show specially brought from London. The Count had forgotten the main thing—publicity—although he had a fine organiser in Eric Longden, the racing motorist.

What a chance for me to photograph a real Ruritania, with its real police in fancy dress and our own actresses, on the terrace of Monte Carlo. Jack Stanford, star dancer of the show, arranged with the producer to bring the entire company, fully costumed, down from their French casino to the famous terrace overlooking the sea. It did not occur to me then that there was a fight on, to the death, between the old and the new casinos.

It was a wonderful sight to see the pretty English girls in lovely stage costumes set in that lavish architecture framed by giant palms. We had a scene picture arranged, and I was about to take it when the police appeared, followed by a charming young man who wanted to know what I was doing and who had given me permission to do it.

"René Leon," I replied, only knowing the name of the man who had taken over from Camille Blanche, the founder of Monte Carlo.

"Are you sure René Leon gave you permission to do this?" answered the charming young man, in perfect English.

"Oh yes, quite sure; he likes this kind of thing for publicity," I said, full of assurance born of the good times I was having with the rest of the Riviera entertainment providers.

"Do you know René Leon when you see him," was the next question.

Of course I did, I said; but inwardly beginning to wonder what this chap was getting at. The world stood still as the crowd increased. The girls and the comedians became restive, so I tried to brush him on one side. But his four gorgeously uniformed policemen did that to me. The picture began to dissolve while Captain John Hare the stockbroker tried to give me a message by signs from the terrace. The next few words shot me to pieces.

"Well, I am René Leon. Not only have I not given you permission, but I have never seen you before," he said, turning his back on me while the lovely ensemble just melted away before my eyes.

Society sniggered and drifted on. I was deserted and deflated, with the police in two minds whether to run me in.

A friend came forward. Captain Hare, a retired stockbroker, was handling the publicity for the new casino. I had to get in right with René Leon pretty quickly, or I might be banished from this heaven on earth. Next morning John took me to the offices in Monte Carlo casino. Luckily John was on good terms with both concerns.

"This is *the* René Leon—not the man you met in Paris," said John when he introduced me.

In one tactful sentence he put me right back where I was before I lied myself off the terrace. Not only did René Leon forgive me for trying to photograph the rival musical company on his steps, but he gave me permission to do so, and also a season ticket for the Sporting Club, which to Monte Carlo is what the Royal Yacht Squadron is to Cowes.

"You were such a convincing liar that I almost felt like somebody else," he said with a smile as I left the casino.

Few are allowed behind the scenes of the casino. After this, Mr. Stone, the publicity manager, took me to see the vaults where the money is stored and rationed for next day's play. Never have I seen so much money at once. Attendants carry it in large coffers on their shoulders. He let me photograph all this and also the roulette factory—a wonderful institution—in all its phases. Every part of the complicated wheels and bases is made by hand by the old craftsmen in the base of the casino. Even the brass railings and metal boxes are made on the premises. He showed me how the business was run and the generous staff



accommodation for the scores of croupiers to rest in during their nerve-wracking job of daily drawing in fortunes. Yes, everything seems to have a happy ending on the Riviera.

My busiest time was during the tennis tournament on the Candomine courts. I photographed it, played in it, entering all events, opens and handicaps. Mr. Simond was the referee, and he timed my matches conveniently. I got through several rounds of handicaps, but in the first round of the open singles I came up against the Marquess of Cholmondeley. He was the best man down there who never won the championship. What gave me the idea I could beat him I don't know.

When the names "Lord Cholmondeley" and "Brown" were called, I walked across to where he was waiting for me to take the usual picture, which I did, and put the camera away. I slipped on my tennis shoes, for I was already dressed for the struggle.

"I wish this man would hurry up," said his lordship impatiently.

"Here I am, and waiting for you," I said brightly, tipping out a set of nice new balls.

"Good God! I didn't know you played this game," he said, as if the camera was the beginning and end of everything for me.

We had a good game. At first he took me for a joke, until I knocked the complacency out of him with some fast deep drives into the corners. He did not see one of my American services. I was once a member of the Drive Hard Court Club, where they never relaxed while on the court, not even during a practice game. C. P. Dickson, Roper Barrett and Anthony Wilding had given me some terrific hidings, after which I could hardly drag myself from the courts to the shower-baths. The Drive Club was the only democratic tennis I have ever known, for the stars played with the rabbits when the rabbits were triers.

Cholmondeley was in perfect condition—never smoked or drank, and went to bed early. At this period he lived for the game, and played every day with the Burkes and other Riviera professionals. How I fought to beat him, but there was not a hope. Anything I smashed at him he seemed to pick up with ease. Sometimes I got him on the run from side to side to run up and cut off his returns. I got him guessing, but could

not get him down, always needing the last elusive point. Although he beat me, it took some time to do it.

I and a partner drawn out of the hat were down to play the Duke of Westminster and Mrs. Satterthwaite, and were already on the courts when rain came on. Mr. Simmonds ordered the match to be abandoned. I had a lot of other matches, but got nowhere in the opens. I don't think I had the right sort of training. Here is a sample of it.

After I had taken my morning's pictures, John Hare and I would accept Solly Joel's invitation to share a bottle of champagne with him, or any of the other millionaires who invited us. We favoured Solly Joel's choice of champagne, which was Bollinger. The morning alone brought unlimited hospitality, and as much Mum, Veuve Cliquot as you fancied. At the Trianon there was a wonderful sherry not known in the other bars.

Until twelve o'clock the "Cheese" was crowded with titles of all sorts, and no one who was in Monte Carlo would miss that morning function. As soon as the sun cast the first shadow across a table at mid-day the crowd vanished, leaving only the pigeons, the photographers and the police. The élite dare not be seen on that famous square after twelve. After a wash and change of clothes we sauntered in to lunch. And what lunches! There was always the youngest and tenderest of chickens done in any manner you wished.

Then came a short siesta, followed by an afternoon's dancing for the young or full afternoon's sleep for the middle-aged. Then more gambling and more cocktails. After a dozen dances came another bath and cocktails before dinner. This was the event of the day, and a long time given to it. The new arrivals you missed during the day you saw now, for many slept during that healing sunshine, and only took part in the night's pleasures.

After dinner came more dancing at the Metropole, which closed at 11.30. When I did not dance I took a midnight drink with the big four hoteliers of Monte Carlo: Charles Birtschi (later to become manager of the Savoy, London), Scheck of the Metropole and secretary of the millionaires' Forty Club, Hector Zaccarini and Gustave Besserer, who had learnt their job at the Hotel de Paris under Fleuri. Sometimes we made a night of it, and would be going home as the children were going to school.

The curious thing about this rather hectic life I never seemed

to miss my sleep. Several times I arrived home only in time for a bath and a coffee, to find I had to play off an early round in the handicaps. It was a lovely life while it lasted.

It was after one of these late nights that a mysterious creature waylaid me on the way to the hotel and warned me not to photograph Sir Basil Zaharoff. I asked who he was, for I had honestly never heard the name. When I mentioned the incident, my friends closed up like oysters; even John Hare would tell me nothing. I soon got to the bottom of the mystery. Zaharoff's word was war, for he was the great international armaments king. When Monty Spry turned up—one of the oldest adventurers with a camera—he gave me the low down. At the mention of Sir Basil's name even Monty blenched. I dragged the story from him on condition that I did not attempt to snap Sir Basil while Monty Spry was on the Riviera. "The Mystery Man of Europe" had never been photographed, and was owner of casinos, hotels and armaments factories and had his millions invested in all sorts of enterprises. What a story!

This multi-millionaire who had the destiny of millions in his hand must not be photographed. The funny thing was that he lived in the next suite to mine at the Hotel de Paris, and I had not known it. I let him run free for a few weeks longer and just noted his daily walks with his Princess. Even the town dogs were hushed as the mystery man walked past.

A few days before I left Monte I took three quick snaps of Sir Basil Zaharoff sauntering down the harbour slopes. When he saw the camera he quivered like a deer out of cover. I raised my Foreign Office hat high and low, as no Englishman would ever handle his hat. Sir Basil raised his hat in response, and I was neither shot nor arrested. The fear of the multi-millionaire did not extend as far as Fleet Street, and the picture was published as a scoop. I think it was the queer name which made the mystery, for who would be afraid of a name like Solly Joel or Tommy Lipton?

My last pictures were taken at the Red Rocks restaurant at Menton, where you catch your own fish. The subject made a good stunt, but after they had persuaded me to catch one I had no appetite to eat it, and had to have chicken casserole instead.

As I look back on that very full season, I wonder if after the war the world will be interested in the so-called society pictures:



QUEEN MARIE OF YUGOSLAVIA WITH PRINCE PETER, NOW KING, AND HIS BROTHER AT THE  
QUEEN'S SUMMER PALACE AT LISANJII.



THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR BEING BROUGHT BACK HOME ON BOARD  
THE DESTROYER *VERDUN*.  
In Mid-Channel.

millionaires and their friends on the terrace of Monte Carlo, in the gardens of the hotels, feeding, dancing, yachting—that is, lolling about on the decks of huge steam yachts—watching polo, playing tennis, watching the dreadful pigeon-shooting under the terrace—real bird slaughter, for the birds did not get a chance—watching the bathing, and then watching themselves.

The social round seemed very trifling, but to our editors it was very important. To me it was a terrific contrast from snapping processions of hungry people with their ragged banners on the Embankments, all converging on Trafalgar Square. Even then I wondered how long it would be before the simmering cauldron of Europe boiled over. Very rich and very poor seemed to be the problem in every country. The wise guys said that it would take another war to put things right. When I was sent on a job and had opportunities to listen to leading politicians off the platform, I used to wonder if they were such fools as they appeared. Surely there was some one in the inner circle who was looking after our interests?

It makes you think when you see East End clothing contractors lose fortunes in a night with apparent indifference. That appeared to give them their best thrill—squandering money before that international crowd at the gambling-tables. I am no reformer, for I have long since decided that life is what you make it, but it did seem very uneven that the very money sweated out of those thousands of workers should be the same as that shovelled into the huge casino vaults. Then you realise you can do nothing about it, but just follow the sun, like the rest.

While I was pondering these deep questions I received a cable telling me to cover the Winter Sports. This meant covering the younger section of the same crowd. St. Moritz, Davos, and other Swiss resorts were the favourites then. Here was another wonderful contrast, with young society skating, skiing, tobogganing and dancing—certainly a healthier life than that on the Riviera.

For a time I seemed to be marked down to follow society from one seasonable place to another. Except for the very short London season, the continentals have worked the calendar so cleverly that when one place is out of season another one is going at full blast. Le Touquet was always a good stand-by for the society papers. When the public began to tire of this spot,

which has a poor sea beach—not a patch of any of ours—Frenchmen and Italians would soon create another attractive resort. And so it went on, the continuous round of pleasure. I found the same pleasure-lovers just moving on from one place to another, bored and *blasé*, not knowing what to do for the next thrill. Life was hard work for them.

### COWES, PRESSMAN'S PLAYGROUND

Like most people, I like to do everything once. When I was sent to Cowes to cover the great yacht race week I found it to be a huge social event. English society, who had worked conscientiously through the year's social programme, were there. Everybody who was anybody had to attend meetings like Ascot, the Derby, Goodwood and now Cowes. I covered Henley too, but this was already dying as a social function.

The great yachting week was a comic interlude—something different from anything I had yet covered. Not even my colleagues could take it seriously, and there were scores of them, scribblers and camera-men. Our job was to board the yachts and snap society playing at being sailors in the most ravishing of costumes. It was an eye-opener to see the morning parade wending its way from the Royal Yacht Squadron, the holy of holies, where no pressmen dared to enter.

It certainly gave me pause when my colleagues said that it was never done, a pressman entering the grounds of the Squadron. No pressman must even go on the short jetty with the framework of ornamental iron-work. Even dear old Tommy Lipton dare not land there, and certainly he could not buy his way into the Squadron. We would see about this later, I thought.

There must have been fifty Press-photographers there. We worked in schools and hired large motor-boats to take us to the royal yacht. King George and Queen Mary were the first on our plates. Then came the Duke of Connaught, Princess Mary and the Princes. Precedence finished with, we then shot whoever came into our finders. We were well entertained when we visited the yachts, for society seemed ready to give their very souls to get their pictures in the weekly papers. No other assignment was such a routine. After we had done the royal party we photographed some serious yachting. Then we went ashore

to do the same people on the short parade. We used the same sweet-shop as a dark room at sixpence a change of plates, made up our parcels, wrote our captions almost word similar and took the same imaginary taxis to get our parcels away to London. We used the same hotel and the same pubs, and we all turned our backs on the mate who saved his millionaire boss when he fell overboard while jockeying for position at the marked buoy.

As a holiday it was grand. As a training-school for pressmen with initiative it was laughable. I decided to get some snaps inside the Squadron for new pictures to go into the *London Graphic*, the *Daily Graphic* and the *Bystander*. I found the gatemen unbribable. Without camera I sauntered round the outside of the buildings and grounds. I watched the tradesmen's entrance and the loads of good things being carried in. To crack this crib photographically would need a clear day, for I would have to get to a hiding-place very early to avoid being noticed and perhaps put to death. Judging by my colleagues, to enter where no pressmen had ever trodden would be sinning beyond sin.

So on the Thursday, when the social round of pictures had begun to bore our art editors, I committed the deed. I slipped in the back entrance on the slope and waited in the bushes. It was a tedious wait, but was worth it. There was certainly some lovely dresses, and the women wore lovely big hats, which gave them plenty of scope for ravishing coiffures. I took all sorts of pictures, but the old Commodore of the club did not come my way, and I must have him in the bag. Their majesties unconsciously posed very nicely for me against a sea full of yachts and other craft.

It was now time to make a getaway. I was slipping across the grass unnoticed when a guest spotted me and called the Commodore. As he came forward I snapped him at five yards against a background of society women. He wanted to know how I got into the grounds. If I had told him, he would only have put a man on the back gate, so I let him think I had come by the sea front. I continued taking pictures until I had enough of the people I recognised, wished him good yachting for the rest of the week and joined the parade towards the gate.

Bateman should have been there to draw the scene, the officials' faces and the rest of the members and their friends as they stared at the isolated intruder. If fire and brimstone had burnt me



up I would not have been surprised. My colleagues stared at me as if I were a creature from another world and shunned me until I was out of sight of the club. Did I get any stuff? Of course; go and help yourselves.

Standing quite aloof, as befitted their professional status, were Norman Hillson, J. M. N. Jeffries, S. P. B. Mais and other special correspondents. Although even they unbent a little at Cowes, they were aghast at my deed. I was the violator of the sanctuary of the rich and distinguished. Norman was also distinguished for his winged words, which later took him up to the stratosphere of the League of Nations. Dear old Jeffries also lived in the clouds, from where he did brilliant articles on commonplace subjects. H. V. Morton stood some distance away with his impish smile. I passed on into the town feeling like a leper, but soon had my plates on the way to London.

"Why did you do it?" asked Norman at dinner with Jeffries at the Marine Hotel.

The latter shared his bottle of wine with us. One thing led to another. After dinner we sauntered along the front and Norman Hillson complained about the town band not playing well enough.

"Why don't you take over the band?" said Jeffries.

"Yes, why don't you?" added Norman.

So they egged me on. The collectors were having a thin time coaxing coppers out of the holiday crowd. Then they said I dared not take over the band, which had more than thirty players. I waited until the finish of one piece, and then asked the old conductor if I might conduct for one number. Certainly, he said. I took the baton and asked for the Gladiator's March. Luckily he had this, and also El Capitan. I asked the band to tune up. It was extraordinary how much out of tune were some of the instruments. It took only a few moments to adjust some of the shanks and slides, and then we got going. I explained how I wanted the march played. Fortissimo must be fortissimo, and pianissimo must be a whisper.

I gave them a bar's beats, and off we went. Did that band play? What a crowd gathered round! They wanted an encore, which we gave and nearly blasted in the hotel windows. Then we played El Capitan with full light and shade. It was surprising what volume we got from that enthusiastic band. The money rolled in. I told the crowd that the next number was

by very special request, and it would be a silver collection. And the crowd responded very generously. We played some more marches, and after we had drained the last coppers from that holiday crowd I handed back the baton. The dear old conductor told us that the collection was a record one, and would I mind coming along the next evening. I obliged, and conducted that band every evening I was in Cowes.

But those wheedling correspondents had not done with me yet. As we passed the post office they saw a small meeting. By the time we got to it all was over and the speaker had departed.

"Start a political meeting," said Jeffries mischievously.

"That beats you," said Hillson.

"How much do you bet I don't start a meeting?"

"A quid that you don't collect two hundred," was the answer.

I jumped up the post office steps. Luckily the place had been closed hours ago. Then I discovered how easy it is to get a crowd anywhere to listen to anything. I told that small group that little did they know what I had come to tell them. People hurrying on their way came back to listen, and in five minutes the street was jammed. There was a great message coming to the people of Cowes, I said. Subject? None at all. Just an imitation of a Hyde Park orator. I talked drivel for a quarter of an hour and they hung on to every word. More listeners rushed from the end of the street, as if afraid of missing something. The bigger the crowd the louder I talked. I said I wanted to reach the common people, those unfortunate ones always on the fringe of things, never getting anywhere, always late for this world's rewards. I had come to Cowes to tell them how to be first at the post. Tonight we had with us that famous international correspondent, and also that wizard of weaving words into beautiful patterns, Mr. J. M. N. Jeffries. Give them a hand, I said, at which my two supporters started to edge out of the crowd.

How was I going to get out of this jammed street? I uttered some more guff and said that they would hear more during the week, but that would be all for tonight. No wonder people get into Parliament, if people listen with such rapt attention as they listened to me that evening, just for a bet which was paid in wine.

As I said before, everybody who was anybody went to Cowes—even the crooks. One small gang have some very finished rackets which never fail. Here is one of the least known but the most practised. They spend the first day prospecting for mugs, who must have special characteristics, or they won't fall. You know the irritating kind of creature who, when you are deep in the telling of a good story and getting laughs, will butt in either to correct you about a place, or says he has heard it before. When you get restarted and want to get your big laugh he will chip in again over some minor detail. While you are trying to finish your story he might even develop one of his own which crabs you at once. Well, send him to Cowes for the cure. I will tell it you with relish.

Imagine the scene in a first-class bar in Cowes. Two well-dressed customers are holding an earnest conversation at one end, just loud enough for anyone to hear. In comes the affluent onion at the other end of the bar with perhaps an acquaintance who has picked him up on the front. The first couple are talking about their experiences in Colombo, the capital of Burma, and the luck they had in timber and ivory deals.

"Mind you, I would not have done so well out of the last lot had not Colombo been the capital, where all the real business is done. And of course the old dad, who had lived there donkeys years before he was married, taught me the ropes. The contacts he made for me in that wonderful city are nobody's business," says one, which is too much for the mug, now edging nearer with his acquaintance.

"Excuse me, gentlemen, but I could not help but overhear you refer to Colombo as the capital of Burma," he starts.

The two crooks turn round, affecting surprise that anybody should interrupt them, but one says:

"Well, what about it?"

"May I correct you, sir? Colombo is the capital of Ceylon," says the onion triumphantly.

The two crooks look at the man who has offered his information, unbelief and slight resentment in their faces. Then one says:

"Well, I have lived there long enough, and ought to know, and my father before me," and the two turn away to continue their talk.

For them the interrupter no longer exists, and they get well

down to discussions on ivory and timber. The mug is now hopping mad to put things right. It needs only one more mention of Colombo, and perhaps a little encouragement from his acquaintance, to send him forward again with his unwanted and unsolicited information. I should have told you that the mugs are carefully sorted out first, not only for their gift of correcting their fellow-creatures, but also for their habit of carrying plenty of cash. Then they are put on the list.

The onion now wants to bet that Colombo is the capital of Ceylon, after again getting into conversation with the seemingly reluctant crooks. You will see no better acting on a West End stage. They pause in their discussion to listen to a silly story from the mug. How they laugh at the pointless effort! But they still insist that Colombo is the capital of Burma.

He falls right into it when he says:

"If I did not know that I was betting on a certainty, I would bet you a hundred pounds you are wrong."

So the most stubborn of the crooks quietly draws two hundred pounds from his wallet and says that he does not mind losing money for a principle. Then the money is covered by the noseyparker, for by now he has swallowed some double scotches. The question is who shall be stake-holder. Here again the mug takes the initiative. Seeing a very dignified bearded yachtsman in immaculate uniform reading the *Times*, he ventures to ask him to hold the stake money. When the honest old yachtsman hears what they want he gruffly informs them to go and settle their bet by the map upstairs. He settles back into his *Times*, while the party saunters off to see the map.

The crooks show no undue haste to get up the few stairs and passage to the billiard-room, and after taking the wrong turning, they reach it. Here sure enough is a map of the world. The mug can hardly contain himself. A game is in progress, but he minces round past the players and glides up to the great map. The two crooks follow his finger right to the spot, Ceylon. Closer scrutiny brings out the gleeful remark:

"There you are, gentlemen; there is the capital of Ceylon."

And there sure enough is Colombo. The faces of the couple are studies in surprise. They are speechless as they stare at that map. At last one turns to the other and says:

"Fred, if you had told me my memory could play me such a trick I would not have believed you."

He continues to stare stupidly at the map and runs his eyes up to Burma. He cannot realise how he could have got so much mixed up with the names—old age or something. He orders some more whiskies from the marker. They sit down to consider just where they went wrong. They inveigle the mug to tell one of his silly stories. Then he loses himself in another. At last he suggests going back to the main bar. Still retaining the initiative, he leads the way, chatting all the time, until they step into the main bar.

The *Times* is still there as the mug goes over to give the news of the winner of the bet. But the yachtsman is not, for he has handed his newspaper to a neighbour. Billy Muggins steps over to the barmaid, who says she thinks the bearded yachtsman has gone to the gentleman's cloakroom. The crooks now introduce that subtle ingredient used by all the world's confidence tricksters. They make the mug feel a great lad. Time goes on, and of course the honest old yachtsman does not return. He did go to the gentlemen's cloakroom, but it was only for a quick change, and now he can be seen, if you only knew him, prospecting for another mug.

What can you do about it? The police? What can they do if you should fall for such frame-ups? The two crooks say to the mug that they thought he knew the old yachtsman. So they have a lunch and plenty of liquor and there is one less of that story-spoiling fraternity. Very few of these onions, when they think the matter over in the clear light of day, ever confess their trouble to the police.

There are several of these police-proof swindles, and the only advice I can pass on is, don't bet with strangers, no matter how certain you are of winning.

## A DAY OFF

The only sequence in my story is the background—our base, Fleet Street. Few incidents are connected in this Press-photographers' blind alley, for there is no way out: only the way you came in. Whoever heard of a camera-man going up to be an editor, anyway—or to promotion of any kind, for that matter? He only retires when he is too shaky to hold his camera, and then, like the old soldier he is, just fades away.

So you make the most of it while you are there. There are consolations. When you leave the office for an hour or a year, anything can happen to you. You are never bored, for there is always action. Even on your day off there are unforgettable incidents, sometimes tragic.

Once on my day off I and a hundred other pressmen were nearly roasted alive. Chris Bale, our assistant sports editor, used to play me tennis on Mousleys' Courts, East Sheen. One day we took on the two Mousley brothers, then professional champions, and beat them in five sets. This was not so hot as it sounds, for Read, Maskell, Hiron and company did not bother about the doubles that year.

We celebrated on the way to the shower-baths. Instead of lunching with us as usual, Chris said he was invited to a special Press lunch at Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium. Young Stribling was doing a work-out for the Press before he fought Phil Scott. Fred Stowe, the perfect host, was in charge of arrangements. He phoned me a welcome.

We drank Olorosa sherry before a well-planned lunch of the best from soup to cigars. The banquet-hall was decorated with flowers and festoons of coloured paper. All went swimmingly right through to the Bisquit de Bouche Cognac. We were discussing the delicious cooking while puffing the Bolivars.

Then came the speeches, after which the chairman suggested that the moment had arrived for a flashlight photograph by the local man. Chris and I were seated near the photographer arranging his tripod, a large camera and an old-fashioned powder-pan. I was meditating why some of us make such hard work of life. We Press-photographers just let off a small flash and away we went. But why should I worry, on my day off?

After the local man had several times asked us to keep still and face his way, he adjusted the percussion cap and poured enough powder on it for a score of flashes. The same old error. I thought of my own experience years ago, when Scotland Yard thought I had blown up the Peace Conference. That happened only once, but these old-timers ought to know better.

At last he brought off the explosion. When the smoke cleared and the coughing had subsided I noticed a thin ribbon of paper from one of the floral garlands had caught fire, as yet only a spark. I grabbed the syphon of soda and was just taking aim when Chris pushed down my arm. He thought I was fooling. Even

while I was telling him that the building might not be fire-proof, our end of the room suddenly burst into flames.

The fire darted up the columns to the ceiling. In seconds only the building was a roaring furnace. The dry wood and partitions flared up quicker than a well-laid fire. Although our clothes were singed and smelling, Chris did not lose his nerve. He grabbed the box of Bolivars and told me to grab the Cognac.

If someone from the outside had not had the presence of mind to push up the roller shutters which extended the whole length of the hall, Fleet Street would have lost a hundred or so of its sporting editors and reporters. It was just as if the outside wall had suddenly vanished—a very lucky thing for us. So we all staggered out to the car park without a casualty. Chris stowed away the salvaged bottles and cigars in the boot of my car.

We went back to view the complete wreck of the banquet hall. Bottles of liquor were still popping. Stribling and his father and the guests were helping the firemen to put out the blaze. As it was my day off, we drove away in the car to a quiet, shaded spot on the river-side and sipped and smoked until the evening.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### UNKNOWN WARRIOR

WHEN THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR was brought home to England in the destroyer *Verdun* no one was allowed aboard except the officials. More than a hundred of us went to France, each secretly determined to get an exclusive picture of the coffin at sea, guarded all the way over by the Navy.

We met the coffin from the battlefields and photographed the very impressive ceremony at the dock-side, surrounded by Marshal Foch and other French generals and statesmen. Masses of troops and a huge crowd of civilians made up the great background. When the other ninety-nine were not looking, each of us asked the commander of the destroyer if we could get a passage to Dover.

No, we could not go with him, and if he found anyone attempting to get in his ship he would have him thrown overboard. We had taken some very inspiring pictures on the route to the coast and also at the dock-side, but it was the naval picture—the sailors who brought him to France taking him back home again—which would be the picture of the day, if it could be got.

While we were sorting out positions to cover the dock-side angle, the cortege arrived, headed by a massed band. The emotion of the whole assembly was intense. We took picture after picture, watching each other like cats. If one man got aboard, there would be a sleepless night for the rest. English camera-men will never agree not to cover any picture as long as there is a chance of a scoop. You can never relax until the job is over. There were no buildings or cover of any sort to hide a prospective stowaway. Every part of that highly polished ship stood out, with every line and rivet revealed.

As some of my colleagues, knowing my weakness for stowing away in anything which will float, were eyeing me suspiciously, I moved from the sentries at the gangways. No use trying to bribe them on such an occasion. I climbed on a stack of timber to get some elevation as the cortege approached the ship. The music swelled into a wonderful volume, intensifying the drama of the occasion. Even we hard-hearted press-



men were moved. All eyes were now riveted on that small coffin, draped with the Union Jack. The bearers stepped forward towards the gun-carriage, ready to receive the coffin and carry it across the gangway.

I was now on the ground, and watched the bearers take the coffin on their shoulders. Even the eyes of the two sentries on the forward gangway were now on the coffin. I passed from my perch and moved swiftly behind the troops drawn up for the last part of the ceremony. All were mesmerised by that dramatic moment as the bearers started for the gang-plank. As they moved, so I moved, like a shadow, across to the destroyer in front of the sentries' non-seeing eyes.

The nearest cover was the barbette, masking off a small galley. A cook was staring through a slit in the plates at the coffin being brought aboard. When it was placed on deck, covered by masses of flowers, he turned to me as if he had seen a ghost. I whispered that everything was all right, and slipped down a narrow stairway completely out of sight, and waited. My colleagues were still busy taking pictures as the French General saluted a farewell to the soldier who had helped to free his country. So tense was the silence that to the rigid spectators the clicks of the cameras sounded like rifle-shots. I was missing many good pictures in my gamble to get the masterpiece of that occasion.

Several minutes passed before the ship started her homeward journey. So close was I to my colleagues, I was afraid to breathe. At last the cables were cast off, and not even a splash disturbed that dramatic silence. The French sailors lifted the thick ropes from the bollards without a shout or an order. Down in the heart of the ship I felt a slight throb, and, very slowly, we began to move. My view of the last scene was the most impressive I had ever witnessed. The thousands of troops stood in rigid reverence, while the women behind quietly sobbed into their handkerchiefs. Four sailors on deck stood with reversed arms at each corner of the coffin.

I was safe now, and, once on the move, I knew the Navy would not turn back to put me ashore. I could not resist peeping through a port-hole and seeing my colleagues in a compact body at rigid attention with hats removed. There stood two superb tacticians equal in craft to Jim Console—Phillips of the *Mail* and Stevens of the *Mirror*. Many others of the London and

Provincial Press were there, and scores of agency men. Heavens, to have that mass of competition safe on the dock-side was unbelievable! If only my luck would hold! Even while telling of this episode it may sound worse than committing a crime. It is a pity that good pictures have to be got this way. But a murderer is not more unscrupulous than a man with a camera and a chance to get a great picture. Our pictures are for posterity as much as for their brief appearance in the daily Press. Long after the photographer and how he did it are forgotten, posterity will say what a lucky thing it was that such pictures were taken. Artists can paint their impressions of dramatic moments, but they can never catch the drama and symbolic simplicity of what actually happened.

When the scenes at the dock-side had become a mere smudge in the distance I settled down until the officers and French officials had gone below. Then I peeped through the slit of the barbette and saw with a shock that the guard of honour had also gone below. The coffin was now stripped of all the flowers, and lay there alone on the bare deck. I made sure of this by putting a couple of plates on it. But how to get the complete picture? I went down the ladder again and waited until the cook came my way.

After a long time he came along, and I offered him a cigarette and made my peace with him. When he heard of all that was lacking to make the picture, he said it might be possible to ask the guard of honour to come up for a moment. "Don't disturb any of the officers," I begged. Here was the friend again who arranged the greatest picture of that year. The guard came up quietly and put on their equipment, silently taking up their positions with reversed arms. I soon finished the job and released the sailors, pleased at having their pictures taken on such an occasion.

As I packed away my camera I began to wonder how I could get off that ship unseen. Wings were the only things which could have helped me. That short voyage of an hour was to take five hours. The *Verdun* cruised about the Channel killing time, for a wide margin had been allowed, so as to cope with any delay on the French side.

I noted with alarm that while I was below the commander of the ship had placed his belt, sword and cap just inside the barbette. Before I had time to vanish he appeared round the

corner to prepare for the shore ceremony. As he caught sight of me he came at me like a blizzard. How he cursed me and the whole of Fleet Street! I left him to his toilet, and dived down the stairs to take refuge below.

From the port-hole I caught sight of the white cliffs of Dover. How I wished for wings, like the gulls overhead, to carry me past that mass waiting on shore. Even now, unless I could get to London before the paper went to press, the effort would be wasted. When I was found they could take my plates and detain me! If you break an Army order they can skin you alive—at least, they threaten to—and then put you in the cooler for a night, making your pictures useless for the paper.

As we edged our way into Dover Harbour I could see the thousands of spectators and officials. Cranes and gantries were bristling with cameras. All those pressmen not on the French side were here at Dover for the great homecoming. The bridge was lined with more camera-men and ciné photographers. The ceremonial scene was set, and a most frightening mass of police and officials awaited our arrival. The cook said that only one gangway was to be put ashore. Had I to walk that plank right into that glittering gathering—admirals and generals, civic officials and lines of police, while behind them, drawn up into cast-iron ranks, were companies of guards? On the deck of the *Verdun* the ceremony was all ready for the landing: guards at each corner of the coffin, French and British officials at rigid attention as we came alongside the dock. When the ship was made fast there was ten feet of water between me and the dock. So to get off the destroyer I would have to run that gauntlet, past the commander and the officials, onto the gang-plank to heaven only knew what trouble.

I waited until the bearers were about to raise the Unknown Warrior, then I skipped along the deck, remorse gnawing at me. I dashed along the plank as if I had all the right in the world to be there, while Fleet Street gazed down at me in shame. Their looks were enough to sizzle me. I plunged through the thousands of troops to the station. Never have I been so stared at. I cleared straight out of the dock station and searched for the nearest garage. I promised the driver of the car the earth if he could beat the special train which I knew would not start for some time. Thank heaven funeral ceremonies move slowly. My pictures were going to be first on the art table to catch all

editions. I was expected later, just in time to catch the London edition.

The art editor—dear old Jock Petrie—stared, and asked me if I had flown home. He gave me the front page and most of the other space—and the day off next day. My sacrilegious deed was forgiven when I sent the Commander an abundance of enlargements of his ship carrying the Unknown Warrior.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### A FEW GERMAN ASSIGNMENTS

HERE ARE A FEW INCIDENTS which happened in Germany, given as a reminder of mistakes we need not repeat. The Ruhr episodes are the most vital. The Germans refused to dismantle their great Krupps gun-shops. They got away with it until just recently, when Bomber Command started in to complete the job. They also refused to deliver coal to the French, and so, after much provocation, the French decided to fetch it. The British and Americans were invited to join in the expedition, but we stood aloof on the Rhine bridgehead, while the Americans started to leave Europe, taking thousands of their dead with them.

I was sent to cover all these phases. Like others on the spot, I wondered why we did not disarm Germany completely when we had the chance. Not only did the German masses expect this, but they also expected us to occupy Germany, so that while the new freedom and franchise were being established, the Allies, as impartial liberators, would keep order. They knew that as long as the German war machine existed there was no chance of freedom from the arrogant Prussians. Real German Public Opinion was articulate neither in the Press nor parliament.

The queer thing about this was that there were many higher-ups who also wanted the British Army to occupy all Germany, for quite another reason—as a barrier against Bolshevism! How do I know? I was there, and spent all the time I could spare talking to all classes, trying to improve the German I had learnt in prison. I think I have met as many Germans and have travelled as far in their country as any other Englishman. Yet, outside the professional military caste, I never met a German who wanted to be a soldier. My job took me in all directions, and I got to understand the language. When you mix freely among the millions of ordinary bread-and-butter folk you find them just like any other people whose destinies are decided in the capital. To say that militarism is in their blood any more than in our own is pure bunk. A born soldier? He has no choice. Against his will he is flung into the German war machine,

and is told that he likes it. "It isn't everybody who wants to be a butcher", is a favourite remark when men discuss conscription. He is born in a conspiracy. He is taught that enemies are forever surrounding his country. Read their school books, and you will learn what they have always thought of us, with our "Rule Britannia".

The ordinary German is born to be the victim of the bureaucracy and its masters, the Prussian war lords and the industrialists. There was always a Gestapo in Germany in some form or other—a machine to suppress anyone who looked like a menace to the privileges of junkers. Nor did Hitler invent total war. You will read about it in most of the old German war books. First terrorise the populations! That was the common theme—not only the enemy's population, but also their own. Hitler improved on all this, and found the German war machine ticking over ready to his hand, and with the addition of a powerful air force to be expanded in commercial guise.

It is ironic that only now is Krupps being destroyed by the R.A.F., when, without cost of money or life, it could have been abolished as an arms factory by the Inter-Allied Missions in 1919. The French appealed merely for security, for they knew that so long as the colossal German war machine stood intact ready to resume its deadly work, there would be no security for them.

Even when General Nollet was ordered by Paris to proceed with the most important item in the programme of disarming Germany, the Missions struck the first rock of German resistance. They opposed destruction of their arms factories while exploiting our attitude to the French—and got away with it.

While this was going on I found that the ordinary Germans were looking forward to the time when there would be no more enemies, no more armaments, and no more armies to pay for. Simple souls! Of course you could not read this in the Press, for Germany's millions had only the Red newspapers in which to put their case. And the funny thing is that in the political sense there was no sign of Communism. This was left to the Spartacists, whose speeches could not lash the German workers to go Red.

Mixing very freely with everyone in the cafés and clubs, and even in their homes, I found that the middle classes and workers all showed the same fear—that the Allies might leave them to

the mercy of their old tyrants before they had learnt to use their new liberation. They trusted President Wilson and his new programme for the common people of the world, and they trusted us, too, when we put over our propaganda so effectively during the last year of the Great War. They only became bitter when we did not keep our promises, and just handed them back to their masters, making enemies both of them and the French. No one cared, for everyone was sure another war could not happen in our time.

Yet our armies of occupation made a wonderful impression on the German man-in-the-street. When they saw the officers of the Inter-Allied Missions they had confidence. I remember General Malcolm's first appearance on the Unter den Linden. He amazed the spectators by taking the pavement unarmed. They were even more amazed when they saw the General and his officers move out of the way of pedestrians and police. They gaped as they watched our officers, with their simple, gentlemanly manners, replacing the arrogant Prussian officers, who used to strut along the pavements pushing the civilians into the gutters.

When Director Busch of the famous circus saw how the British Army went about its duties, he told his friends that they should appeal to the British Government to let the armies occupy the whole of Germany until it was certain Soviet Russia did not invade a country now casting off its chains and struggling for equal liberty with the rest of civilised Europe.

In the meantime Germany's old rulers waited behind the scenes, directing their stooges until they considered it safe to come out and openly take charge of the country again. Their first appearance was made when they murdered Kurt Eisner, Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. At the same time they tried to make our flesh creep by sending out propaganda telling of Bolshevik atrocities, to which we gave much prominence in the daily Press.

But to return to the main story and what I had to do. The best picture would be the secret gun-shop where the huge lathes and boring machines were still intact. If this gun-shop were scrapped you could lay out ten football fields in the space. This gives you an idea of its size, and there were scores as large as this. I snapped these great lathes, and boring machines a hundred metres long, and left it to my paper to do the rest. Public opinion would react, so I thought.

But I had figured without those "Balance-of-Power" back-room boys in Whitehall. There was no mystery about the Germans not disarming. The real mystery was who was responsible for the policy which roused the French to fury, then reduced them to hopelessness?

It was Colonel Everett who took me into the famous Kanonen Werstatt Number 11 and showed me the huge machinery ostensibly still ticking over for commercial purposes. The machines held large cylinders for making nitrogen from the air, which was not economically possible, as there were existing machines made for this job lying idle. The whole thing was a blind, and no one seemed to care; only the French were worried.

So I wrote my first article, "Krupps as the Curse of Civilisation", which Doctor Bulloch published prominently in the London *Graphic*. The reception from the Germans was bad enough. They threw me out of their de luxe Hotel Essenerhof. I asked them if I could take up residence in the little old house which the founder of the firm built and which looked like a tiny shack amidst those tremendous buildings. They saw me right off the premises.

My reception by the British section was even worse! General Bingham, the head of the British section of the Inter-Allied Missions, turned on me as if I had broken into a bank. What right had I to go poking my nose into matters which did not concern me? He showed me large charts giving the number of small arms surrendered, and also mentioned the huge testing targets for the big guns which used up as much concrete as would have built a row of cottages. Of course the Germans blew these up to show the Missions they were doing something towards disarmament. But these targets were useless anyway, for Krupps were already working on plans for bigger and better guns which would need bigger and better targets against which to test them.

And what about the lathes and boring machines? I asked. The General replied that it would be ridiculous to think that we should leave the German nation to the mercy of an invader.

Even at that time in Krupps two opposite shifts were working night and day to beat each other—the big gun-makers and the armament manufacturer. The latter had to produce a steel armour which could resist any known armour-piercing shell at certain ranges. And they worked until they got it. Then the



gun-makers experimented until they produced a gun and shell which would smash the latest armour. And so it went on, and the process was never interrupted for long.

I interviewed General Morgan, who admitted that the British were not blameless in this matter. He added that the French, who are realists, thought their two recent allies quite blind and hopeless.

And what did my attempts to expose the deception do? I found that many British on both sides of the North Sea and the army on the Rhine had developed such a brotherly love for their late enemies they had gone frankly pro-German. The Germans could do no wrong. You need only read the British Press of those days to see that some sections had developed this pro-Germanism to the point of hero-worship.

This might not have mattered, but our attitude was a big factor in sabotaging some good intentions and real practical work already started. I remember the conversations with the German engineers in the Essenerhof, travelling back to Scandinavian countries, Russia and anywhere they could get facilities to make turbines for their submarine, already being built in other countries. No wonder the French were furious, for they knew all about the great plan. When they took documentary evidence, complete with scores of photographs, and laid these on the table before Henderson, the Chairman of the League of Nations, he said:

"This is a house of peace, not war."

All the French wanted was to see Krupps completely dismantled. They maintained that Germany could not make war without their colossal plants. It was the same wherever I went, and nothing could be done about it. The "Balance-of-Power" boys and the thousands of so-called pacifists at home caused to be left undone one of those things which should have been ruthlessly carried out for the sake of the peace of the world.

Can this happen again? Shall we see that great army of bishops, parsons and pacifists, insisting on disarmament at home, until the Empire stands helpless before any aggressor "as an example to the rest of the world", to quote their own words, and then encouraging Germany once more to arm fully, and ready to take the field against the democracies? How alert we shall have to be against labels!

Here is one incident, a tragic result of the muddled thinking

of that period. It was one of the most dreadful bits of slaughter I have ever seen. There were scores of similar incidents. I saw trains derailed, coal-barges sunk in the canals, bridges blown up by the Germans, who were determined that now there was only one party to cope with—the French—they would defy them at every point. I was with Roger of Reuters when a French section hunted out a murderous saboteur, the fire chief of Essen. They shot him dead first, then called out "Halt", in the same manner as the Germans had shot several French officers in cold blood.

We went on to Hamm, and saw the German army already in training. Ebert came to review this new army—the Green Police, they were called then, but no fitter soldiers ever carried a rifle. After the murder of the French officers and the blowing up of a bridge which crushed several French soldiers, there came an order from Paris that a firmer hand must be shown, and that any place suspected of housing stores of arms must be searched. Even then the French were very circumspect, as they knew that, so far as action was concerned, their two allies had deserted them.

One morning, to the amazement of the manager of Krupps, a French officer appeared at the gate and asked permission to inspect the fire station opposite the head office. The directors were amused by the small machine-gun section he had brought with him but left some way behind. At first he was refused admittance. After some waiting, orders came from the directors that the doors could be opened. During the delay the officer was polite and patient. When all the arms had been removed through the back, the officer and his section entered and began their search. While they were going quietly about their job the fire-bell rang. This meant that by an arrangement with the five thousand workers they would all pour into the main street to embarrass any visiting troops. This was the first time any armed troops had appeared at the works. The workers completely blocked the street.

The officer and his section, having finished their job, reappeared at the door. When he realised that his exit was barred, he called for a free passage out. The Germans laughed, and began to taunt him and his men. Bits of coal were flung at them from the high wall opposite. Then pieces of iron began to come down in a shower. One lump of coal struck one of the soldiers, causing

loud laughter from the crowd. The officer gave a sharp order, and his men mounted the machine-gun.

Three times did that tiny officer call out. The crowd started to move towards him, pressed on by those behind. When several men began to surround the section, he said that one step nearer and he would fire. That crowd of poor fools only laughed louder, and began to sing a lewd song designed to irritate the French. The officer, white-faced, gave the order, and a stream of bullets, swung in half-circle, converted the scene into a shambles. That road cleared like magic, leaving worse than a war scene. The dead lay still, while the wounded shrieked and groaned on the ground. Blood trickled in rivulets towards the gutters.

The Frenchmen, grim and determined, picked up their weapon and marched away with their special quick-step, leaving the Germans to clear up the mess. I watched the wounded being removed, and then went on to the hospital, which resembled a field-dressing station. Men were dying as I snapped them being attended to. Their bodies were taken away while other cases were put on to the beds.

Horrible pictures, but it had to be done! The German authorities made the most of the funeral as a national day of mourning. I have never seen so much massed grief as when the women moaned *en masse* in the manner peculiar to German funerals.

Few papers gave an impartial account of the massacre. I was there and saw the Frenchman's dilemma. We were not entirely blameless. Never was a united front so necessary as in those days of peace. The German workers blindly obeyed their masters, who at that moment were safely out of danger at lunch up in the great tower. The grins came off their faces when they saw what their manoeuvre had done. The managing director of Krupps had told me about the plan some weeks before, but I never dreamed it would ever be put into execution. What did he expect the French to do? Whatever else might be said about them, they have never been known lacking in courage, and it takes the toughest courage dealing with unarmed civilians who think you are bluffing.

A few days later I saw the French knocking lumps off German passengers who would not get out of the trains entering the new customs zone at Zarnhorst. The German saboteurs had

blown up some troops in a coach near Cologne, and others had committed other minor outrages. So everyone had to be searched for bombs and pistols. Apart from the rights and the wrongs of the matter, it made my blood boil to see one party of human beings mutilate another, even by disobeying orders. When those still in the carriages saw what was happening to their friends in front, all submitted quietly. Every job I now covered had blood in it.

Next day we saw French colonial troops tearing into the Germans for disobeying another order. They used hedge-sticks cut to leave part of the root as a hammer-head. How they thrashed at the slightest resistance! I remarked to the officer in charge—and he did not mind my taking photographs—that I thought the war was over. It might be over for the British, on the safe side of the English Channel. The Boche recognises only one thing: a superior force to his own. Unfortunately he was right, as the Germans have since proved.

Still, these things could not have happened if the British and Americans had moved with the French. We fell into the German flatter trap. Doctor Solf was now also the unofficial Minister of Propaganda. The British and Americans were fine. But the French? No word was too bad for them. How the Germans flattered English and Americans, and openly insulted the French! At times members of the two nations would not speak when they met on the Rhineland Commission.

That was the plan, as it is now, to make trouble between the Allies. They got away with murder. And the German masses looked on, wondering what sort of fools had won the war and were now throwing away the victory.

Later I again heard that this was all part of a policy to allow the Germans to remain strong, so as to make a protective counter-balance against the French, now left with the finest army the world had ever known. Our old policy of "Balance of Power" in Europe was sending us on the German side for fear of our ally, France! As if they wanted anything from us except a clear understanding, which we would not give.

That is all gone now, but I dread to think that those same influences will rise again among us, to insist once more on leaving the Germans armed to the teeth. Give the Germans as much as you like—trade facilities, the colonies if you like, even milk and honey—but they should be a disarmed nation for

two generations. Then they will find that they can have the protection of the United Nations free. The Scandinavian countries managed without great armaments until Hitler was let loose, and they were the most prosperous countries of the world. Give the ordinary Germans peace for a quarter of a century and they will win their way with work without armaments.

### THE MARKS SWINDLE

Here was a colossal ramp, if you like. Thorough in everything, the German bankers brought off the cleverest but wickedest financial fraud ever invented. By destroying their own currency, they not only ruined hundreds of thousands of foreigners, but also masses of their own people. Internal debts vanished overnight. There was a funny side too.

We pressmen thought that when we lived luxuriously on sixpence a day it was just one of those fleeting strokes of fortune to be made the most of while it lasted. All that we knew was that when we changed a pound we were millionaires for the day, and were treated as such. We were profiting from a racket of which we knew nothing.

This was just the other half of the German plan to fool the Allies, and ran parallel with the policy of obstruction and sabotage. Americans packed away chests of the paper marks to be kept for a "rise". One might as well have expected Niagara to flow backwards. We were often tempted to speculate when we watched the paper fortunes being packed away in large suit-cases.

We escaped because we were practical and content to buy ourselves first-class camera outfits. As I was the only one able to handle the language, I spent my spare time acting as interpreter for my colleagues. We wondered what happened to the bundles of marks after we had pushed them over the counters. Next morning these same marks would be worth less than half their purchasing value, and the pound would be double.

The queer thing about this period was that the high quality of the food and accommodation never varied. Actually the Germans pandered and crawled to us. Never once was I asked for a railway ticket during the whole of this unhappy period. When my colleagues had got all the cameras they wanted, they bought watches and knives. First we would make a deal at

the shop for the articles, then rush to the bank to grab marks hot from the press and get them over the counter. Yet while we were in such a hurry to get rid of our paper marks, we saw scores of our compatriots steadily stacking away the bundles to hold for the "rise". They were certain that those beautiful notes would return to their original value. They were so certain about this, indeed, that several times I nearly fell.

Those who talk so glibly about inflation should see the result it brought to the German middle classes—stark ruin. These little business people were caught in the swindle. They had no other currency. The foreigners just asked for trouble, and many were heavily financially embarrassed for years afterwards. I have often wondered, during our great paper-salvage collections, if any of these hidden hoards ever came into the collector's cart.

Well, the swindle achieved the object of the bankers. They wiped off many sorts of internal debts, rooked the foreigners right and left, and fooled the French—their chief objective. Ours was the funny side of this tragic story. Our daily expenses varied from sixpence to half a crown for Savoy and Rolls-Royce standard in everything. There was always a first-class hotel, even in the small industrial towns. In Cologne and the Ruhr towns restaurants and hotels provided the best. We were given suites with private baths. The best French champagne cost us a shilling a bottle, and the finest cognac a penny a glass. It was all cock-eyed, but it was grand while it lasted.

We breakfasted on *pâté de foie gras* with paper-thin toast Melba, brought between hot serviettes on silver servers. For those who wanted ordinary dishes there was peach-fed ham and unlimited eggs cooked all ways. Even the German hoteliers were all out to please British and American pressmen, who were made to realise what a wicked lot were the French, treating their fallen foes so badly. We listened while the champagne was cooling in the ice-bucket.

The French watched all this with increasing irritation. Then they organised a propaganda factory a quarter of a mile away from Krupps; the reporters used to call for a hand-out of copy. They compared French and German versions of the same incident. It was difficult for anyone to get a balanced view of things, for few really knew what was going on behind the scenes. As for the British attitude, it reminded me of John Burns. After

taking on one of the most responsible jobs in the Cabinet, when danger and responsibility came his way he just gave his hands a dry wash, symbolically washing away all responsibility.

No wonder the British and American newspapers did not get the right perspective of those terrible days. Judging by several of our influential newspapers, the Germans then could do no wrong.

As I say, we camera-men took everything as it came, but it seemed queer to be living in luxury and driving out in beautiful limousines to the scene of the daily murder. Then on again to the scene of a specially nasty bit of sabotage—a booby trap laid for an unsuspecting Frenchman, whose body we could see in pieces among the rubble.

One day we got a message saying that there was a riot in Cologne. Off we dashed, to find the news no rumour. The marks swindle was now galloping to a climax. The value of the mark was vanishing almost as the people held the paper in their hands. Their savings vanished over-night. They stormed Barclay's Bank for still more marks, so that they could be sure of a meal that day. We found a score of mounted police driving back the crowds, and it was only when a few had been badly beaten up that matters were got under control. Never have I seen things so uneven. There we were, after a day of so-called work, spending our evenings in the Wiesel—a wonderful restaurant with no equal in London, unless it be Boulestin's. This was out of bounds to the troops, and only the officers and ourselves were allowed inside. The choicest of wines for coppers. Our favourite dish was Ganzebraten—young goose cooked in wine and served with a large dish of finely flavoured apple sauce.

Then we might be entertained at the famous Opera House, where we saw operas beautifully produced. So wonderful was the music, so perfect the orchestras, we could not believe that the war-makers and musicians could belong to the same nation. We certainly lived hectic lives. It was our once-in-a-lifetime chance to live like millionaires and be treated as such. My editor asked me to write a few articles describing life on the mark. I was as frank as I am now. After the publication of the first article I received a cable from the chief accountant saying:

“Why are your expenses so high in the Ruhr?”

That message certainly gave me pause, and I wondered how I could answer it. I wrote out several answers, but all seemed

too weak to reply to such a delicate question. So I consulted my colleagues. When the editor signs your expenses, the accounts department just have to pay on the nail. Nothing like this had happened to any of us before, and it was of professional importance not only to myself, but to all my colleagues. We sat in solemn conference far into the night, and many bottles of wine were drunk before the meeting voted on the most suitable effort by John Clayton, an American.

"Yes stop I'll buy it stop why are my expenses so high in the Ruhr query stop."

We sent the cable at midnight, and heard no more about the matter.

All things, good and bad, must come to an end. As the story staled, my colleagues returned home. I was left on my own to continue the life of the affluent, but it did not taste so good without the company of the lads. So I went in search of another story.

I soon found another very bloody intrigue. This was the Separatist Movement in the Palatinate. As a reprisal against the Germans for their cunning sabotage and obstructionist methods, the French hired gangs of thugs, trained them to take over the local offices already occupied by the French military authorities, who, although they trained these mercenaries in private, disowned them in public. There were several fights, and the drip, drip of somebody else's blood along the town-hall floors. But when these thugs smashed their way into the mayor's office they got a terrible beating up by a score of Germans waiting for them. Three were killed outright, and one was thrown clean through a second-floor window to be finished off by the crowd below. The citizens of this small province had been warned, and together they liquidated the movement almost at its birth. The queerest thing of all was that the French army officers who had trained and bribed these thugs stood by and watched them being beaten to death. That was another sordid chapter, worth noting merely as a warning to the United Nations when again they have to deal with the enemy.

Later came another farce—trial of the "war guilty". They all did well out of their guilt, especially Thyssen and Krupp von Bohlen and Halbach. We will leave out the Kaiser, who was bound to do well out of the defeat. I spent weeks listening to the conferences of the Allies, which must have cost millions.



The queer thing about the delegates was that they behaved like little dictators living in a world of words, which had nothing to do with the problems they were sent to solve. I believe they forgot what they were really sent out for. Nor did it seem to matter, for whatever decisions were arrived at, very few were carried into effect. They were insincere, incompetent and half-hearted. No wonder the world went to pieces after their peace-building.

The healthiest feature of all this sordid chapter was the British Army on the Rhine. There was no arrogant show of power, but an honest endeavour to carry out the job of occupying the Rhineland without interfering in their industry and rights. When the Union Jack was lowered at Wiesbaden, the ordinary Germans said their last chance of democratic freedom on British lines went with it. I did not see this at the time, and asked the Germans what they meant. They said the same old gang would reinstate the bully back to power, and the military caste would back to regiment the people.

It was strange to see German and British military police patrolling the streets together. They carried on no political intrigues, like the cunning little bureaucrats, but just did their duty of keeping order and preventing crime. After our armies had departed I revisited some of the cities, and found Cologne and Wiesbaden looking like distressed areas. Our armies had certainly brought brightness and trade, and quite a lot of money to spend.

I sat in the cafés and listened to the talk of the new youth movements and other subtle attempts to get the young men lined up ready to build up the new army. There was much talk about the possibility of a return of the burden of taxes, and of whether Germany would be allowed to rearm. At that moment there was no military machine to dictate to them, no armaments to pay for, and no military yet consolidated enough to browbeat them.

They read every scrap of news from England which dealt with our well-meaning pacifists always harping on the question of allowing Germany to rise again, with the means to defend herself against invaders. It might have been the Prussians themselves talking. That was the other side of that cock-eyed period: we disarming as fast as we could, and our late enemy already getting together the nucleus of the new armies. The

ordinary Germans then feared their own system more than they feared ours. I have listened for hours to discussions on the British system, as if it were a heaven-sent remedy for all political ills.

The German masses felt that we had betrayed them after the Armistice. We left them "to stew in their own juice", which meant leaving them to the mercies of their Prussian masters. There must be no more great betrayals, as the Germans called our action when they surrendered their Grand Fleet. We promised to deliver them from their Prussian masters if they surrendered during the last war. We promised all kinds of things in our propaganda. Whatever we offer this time we have got to do. No more of this sort of thing:

"Destroy your Prussianism and dethrone your Kaiser, and we shall be brothers."

Then, when the Germans fired their Prussians and disbanded every vestige of Prussianism from their Navy, our Admiralty refused to accept surrender of the Grand Fleet unless those same officers whom the German sailors had fought in Kiel in 1917 were recalled and again given command of the German Fleet. That was the very beginning of the present nightmare.

When the German Soldiers' Councils had to recall their hated officers whom they had defied and put them back in their commissions, they thought they had been deliberately deceived by us. Those officers were only allowed to take over when the ships reached British waters. I was in the flagship *Koenig*, and saw how the officers at once resorted to their old bullying methods. I have described this matter before, but there is no harm in repeating this point.

The Germans have listened in to our propaganda, and are wondering what would happen if they gave in now. It would not take much to turn the scale, if only we gave them a straightforward lead. Will they have any say, or will they be betrayed again? is what they are thinking. Hitler has only to repeat his warning of what happened after the last war.

The Nazis may vanish over-night; but what shall we insist on in their place? A gang of opportunists from the old Junker of thought? The next strongest group in Germany are the bureaucrats, soaked in the traditional Junkerism. There can be no help from them, for they are the most cunning of all. The

only hope for the ordinary Germans is for the United Nations to take complete control for a time, until the Germans manage to elect their own leaders, who must have some training and democratic principles. There must be some decent Germans not yet in their graves who can lead their people out of the chaos they will find themselves in at the end of this war.

There will have to be hand-picked peace-makers this time, and practical officials who will carry out instructions to the letter. Only men with the impartiality of English judges and the rigid honesty and discipline of an Indian civil servant can accomplish the colossal work. They could prove to the German nation that all wars are unprofitable. Armaments manufacture should earn the death penalty. So should war-making in any form. Give the Germans ten years of close supervision, free protection, and they may then become neighbours fit to live with.

When the last shot is fired let us take the lid right off the Nazi stew-pot and smell what they are cooking up for the hungry peace-makers. Let us take charge of that devil's kitchen, the Nazi Propaganda Bureau and radio, where are concocted those poisonous brews which have poisoned the life of the world—*while we still have the power to do it!*

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### ENEMIES OF THE PRESS

**B**RITISH BLACKSHIRTS NEARLY DESTROYED the freedom of the Press. Having watched Hitler and Mussolini establish their brutal and criminal system by terror, I wondered how long the British Government were going to allow Sir Oswald Mosley's thuggery to frighten them. At least, if our Cabinet Ministers were not scared, they were very puzzled. Never once had I seen the police interfere with the Mosleyites until the notorious marches into the East End, when Jews were beaten up and their shops smashed. Only when it looked like civil war did the Chief Commissioner of Police ask Mosley to about-turn.

When I got back to England after a European tour I recognised the same methods and mouth-to-ear propaganda. We cameramen were the first to feel the brunt of Mosley's attack on the Press, and we were the first to resist it very violently. The secretary of the British Fascists issued permits to Fleet Street to photograph their meetings, and when we did not submit tamely to the troop-leaders' orders, we were hustled out by their thugs, practised in the art of painful ejection.

We could snap the handsome lunatic making his dramatic gesturing on his beautifully draped stage, but heaven help us if we turned our cameras on to the real story: a woman being dragged out by the hair after asking an awkward question, or a man being kicked in the stomach. They were very touchy about these incidents appearing in the illustrated Press.

When we returned to our offices, showing broken heads and smashed cameras, newspaper proprietors did nothing about it. A real fear was creeping into newspaper offices, and many brutal happenings were never recorded. For a time Mosley had Fleet Street beaten. Two of the most important daily newspapers went frankly Fascist, also some of their very special correspondents. That was a black day indeed for Fleet Street.

Many people saw in Fascism a new weapon to use against trade unions and the working classes in general. So the foreign-made dope began to work insidiously. Some of our industrial

magnates were sold the idea by some of Mosley's spell-binders. It was only when, from their elevation in the Albert Hall boxes, they watched the plebs getting it in the neck that they suddenly realised they, too, might later receive the same treatment. It was only when Fleet Street's most courageous editor faced up to the black menace that others took heart and at last made a firm stand which put an end to Mosley's nonsense.

There were many curious happenings during these full years which, although not seeming to have any connection, either in place or time, make me wonder as I look back at my experiences. Those who conspired to destroy our freedom to work we lumped together as our enemies, whatever they were. We found that certain sections of the police made our job a daily struggle. They welcomed this new something in the air, which to us was the invisible menace. I have seen the police stand by while Mosley's thugs manhandled some of the pressmen. As yet only an attitude, the new influence worked silently and invisibly, until we began to feel its vile powers.

Then we could see that it was all of the same piece. Mussolini's gospel was preached long before matters came to a head, and was already operating in unexpected places. I regret to say that I met Fascist-minded parsons who dished it up in their sermons. One London parson preached quite openly about the glories of war, the strong life, men's duty to die on the battlefield, to suffer and obey blindly. There was some queer stuff talked at the various unions and culture groups. If one asked what it was all about, there was a stock reply. Look what it had done for Italy and Germany. Then I asked if they had seen the new order functioning in the land of its birth. No, but what difference did that make? England wanted shaking up anyway, was another stock answer.

So, in passing, may I refer back to a curious police conspiracy against the Press, the photographers in particular? There were many unconnected incidents. Bill Tovey was arrested in Hyde Park, and charged in court, for photographing a baby against a background of flowers. After listening to the evidence, the magistrate asked the police-woman if she had nothing better to do than interfere with a man who was doing a simple job artistically and efficiently. Police had to pay the costs after the case was dismissed. Before this incident *Risely* of the *London Times* was being pushed about by a policeman in Regent's

Park while covering an ordinary job with written permit. He threw off the policeman's arm. An inspector was called to deal with Risely, who told him very firmly to keep his hands to himself, adding that he would obey any request, in spite of the fact that he had a permit. The inspector then told Risely to get out, and started pushing him very violently, the struts of the camera folding up in the scuffle. Risely then warned the officer what would happen if he touched him again. Then came the inevitable. The officer was picked up, after receiving the cleanest punch ever given in self-defence. Risely was arrested. When the case came up, the *Times* saw their man through the ordeal. Result, case dismissed, with costs and damages against the police. The queer thing about this case was that Risely was then dying of a very painful complaint and spending several months of the year in hospital. It was unfortunate that the police officer could not see in that frail body an ex-Air Force man who had laid out many an opponent inside and outside the ring. In spite of his impending end, of which he was quite aware, he was the happiest and most popular man in the street. He made me promise that at his funeral I would take a flash-light picture, and he would leave me his 'special lamp to do it with.

These happenings may sound strange when it is known that every Press-photographer carried special Scotland Yard police passes. These became quite valueless.

"That's no bloody good," was the reply of several policemen when we showed our passes stamped over our portrait by the Yard.

This sort of thing happened on such minor stories as motor-car and railway accidents, fires, weddings and ordinary City functions. So bad did conditions become that at one time it was a constant struggle to get pictures. When the Prince of Wales was the subject, the officials and police went clean up in the air. Even when we were not on view, they looked for us and threatened what they would do if we attempted to take pictures, though we might have a pocket-full of permits.

Dear old Monty Spry, a star of Fleet Street if ever there was one, still going strong for the *Sunday Express*, has had his day's pictures ruined at the big London clubs like Ranelagh, Roehampton and Hurlingham, when covering special social and sporting events, when the secretary was informed that the

Prince was on his way. Monty would either have to get out or leave his camera in the secretary's office for the duration of the stay, although he gave his word that he had not been sent to snap the Prince. He was under contract to provide a page of pictures for one or other of the society illustrated weeklies. By the time the visit was finished, so too would be the polo, tennis, golf or croquet matches, and Monty's day wasted.

Here is the worst case of all—so bad that it brought matters to a head, and a cure. Lord Reading's wedding at Prince's Row Register Office promised to be a nice comfortable job, with no police interruption, for his Lordship had invited us to photograph him and his bride outside the register office. What could Fascism have to do with a simple wedding in one of London's quietest streets? Heaven only knows, but the black dog was on us. Anyway, there appeared that creeping tyranny which sometimes attacks like a termite, silently and unseen, at others like a mad, charging bull.

The Reading wedding being the most important of that season, our chief sent two of us to cover it, under what seemed to be the most perfect conditions. There were few spectators, no police and one of the greatest personalities in the country as subject. Bert Muggeridge said he would do the close-up if I would take the general view, to get in the building and crowd if any turned up. So I placed a short step-ladder on the other side of the road. The bride and bridegroom arrived, and as it was to be a short ceremony, we got all set for the picture. As I stood on my perch it seemed strange to see so few people present at the wedding of such a brilliant man. Below the lads waited in a neat and tidy line, their cameras at the ready. So calm and peaceful was the scene on that lovely day, I meditated—why could not all jobs be so simple to cover? I have seen society weddings with the crowd so dense and uncontrollable it has developed into a free fight. Then no pictures have been got.

Suddenly my Press-paradise crashed to smithereens. Lord and Lady Reading came out smiling, and posed nicely for us on the step. Hardly had the lads raised their cameras than from nowhere came mounted police to plunge into that neat line of camera-men. Those not already bowled over at the first charge were caught again as the police re-formed and charged once more. Rust of the *Daily Mail* was the last to crash to the

ground, his camera smashed to pieces under him. My pal Bert got his picture, one eye on the amazed couple and the other on the mounted policeman coming at him. He made a beautiful swerve, the pass of a matador, and weaved his way to safety, still clutching his camera intact.

For a split second, bewildered on my perch, I took half a dozen real-action pictures, unnoticed by the police. Their rotten deed completed, they re-formed and trotted off triumphantly. Never have I seen such an unprovoked attack on camera-men. I jumped down from my ladder, and was soon among the lads. I collected them and their smashed cameras, packed some in my own car and the rest in taxis. Bert took our plates back and a message to the chief, informing him what I was going to do.

I told the drivers to follow me to Scotland Yard. We drove to the front entrance. The officer on the door looked us up and down as we trooped out of the taxis.

"We want to see Lord Byng on a very vital matter," I said very bluntly.

The policeman smiled sarcastically and said, "Oh yes!"

I repeated the message. The officer retired inside and brought out an inspector to have a look at us. Very briefly I told him why we wanted to see the Chief Commissioner at once. The answer was that the Commissioner never sees anyone. I persisted, and following some discussion the inspector asked us to go round to the Press officer. After we had stated our case he tried to laugh off the incident and belittle the importance of the police attack on us. I soon took the grin off his face, and told him to get a message through to Lord Byng. Unfortunately Lord Byng was out—at least they said he was out. I then asked for the deputy chief.

So we were taken to Lord Byng's office to see his deputy—a retired commander. It was obvious that he, too, was going to regard the matter as a joke. The situation may have seemed funny to him. His smile vanished when I told him what was going to happen.

"We are here just to tell you that the very next time anything of this sort occurs we shall meet violence with violence," I said.

The Commander now sat up and dropped his jocular attitude.

"Is that a threat?" he asked.

"No, an ultimatum. And remember that there are as many



good soldiers in Fleet Street as there are in the mounted police," I said, glancing significantly at the screen, behind which I imagined the stenographer taking down the interview.

"And I hope he gets it down correctly," I added, and repeated very slowly the vital part of the message.

The Commander asked my colleagues if they agreed with all I had said.

"Yes, and a lot more which has gone before," said an agency man.

At this remark the Commander asked us what other incidents had happened, and now took the interview very seriously. We added our personal experiences, while he made full notes of our remarks.

"What do you want us to do?" he asked finally.

"First of all, take these police Press cards, which the officers more often than not tell us are of 'no bloody use', will you, and write something on them which will make them of some use? Secondly, stop these attacks at once. The freedom of the Press was not won easily, and we are not going to lose it at any price. We will fight for it any time and anywhere. If we cannot get justice at His Majesty's police headquarters, then we know that it does not exist any more."

The Commander now saw that what had been a joke to him was a matter as important as life and death. He dropped his eyes to the fragments of Rust's camera lying scattered on his desk. We all stared at these, as if hoping for a miracle to happen. But the miracle did not happen. Instead, the Commander said:

"Well, gentlemen, I quite see your case now, and am very sorry that such a thing should happen. I will attend to the matter at once."

After asking him if we could leave it entirely in his hands without seeing Lord Byng, he said we need have no doubt that the matter would be looked into at once. We thanked him as Rust poured the fragments of his camera into his case, and left for our various offices.

Next morning my chief published my riot pictures of the wedding on the front page. The Commander must have acted very swiftly, for the following day our press cards took us unmolested onto our jobs. The old happy relationship was re-established between Press and police, who now could not do

enough for us. They steadied our ladders, cut a way through crowds, and often gave us a hump up a lamp-post. One mounted policeman, seeing a colleague in difficulties, let him mount his horse to get a general view.

The *Daily Sketch* were the first to publish the pictures and stories, and killed stone dead that incipient tyranny. That was all that was needed, for I never heard of another incident such as that created at Lord Reading's wedding.

Now let us take a look at visible Fascism strutting about arrogantly under its own flag, in its own uniforms and in the country of its birth. Before the incident just related I was returning from the Yugoslavia trip, and had to cross Italy to get home. Then happened the only incident on that lovely tour along the Adriatic. When I reached Sushach I found it to be the Yugoslavian half of the famous town of Fiume, which Mussolini's poet friend had annexed for him. The frontier line was painted across the centre of the bridge over the frontier mountain stream. A few yards farther on the frontier cut through the world's smallest church, the size of a small cell. Barbed wire wound round it prevented either country's citizens entering except on one day in the year.

The Italian soldiers stood on the bridge, heels on the white line, and showed their scorn for the Serbs by spitting over their shoulders onto the Yugoslavian territory. They strutted about in the most provocative attitudes. Several times I had heard a whisper that the Italians were trying to cause a frontier incident as an excuse to go deeper into the town to annex the lot. Apparently the Serbian soldiers had their orders to remain at least twenty yards from the white line, leaving a narrow no-man's-land margin of safety. For three days I lived in the corner room of the hotel overlooking the bridge, feeling certain that my usual luck was going to bring a frontier incident and perhaps a war into my bag.

It seemed hardly possible for this small town to be the place where the first Fascists would splash into the headlines. The ripples of that splash have since risen to hurricanes which are still raging. The founder of the business has just retired and handed it over to his satellites, who find they have taken on a tremendous liability. Imagine how the contrast struck me, having just left a place of peace and contentment, the Queen of

Yugoslavia's summer palace, arriving in this hotbed of hostility, where any moment a battle on the bridge might take place. If it was to take place I thought it might as well do so while I was on the spot.

I took a few pictures just to show the scene before the clash came, and that was all there was to it, for on the fourth day my time limit was reached. When I crossed the white line the frontier guards made straight for me, and even wanted to open my packets of plates. They wanted to know why I was taking a camera into Italy. Waiting on the road was the coach which carries passengers to Trieste railway station. I tried to persuade the Fascist guards that I was merely crossing their country on my way home. I did not want to take any photographs in Italy, and was in a hurry to get to England. But I could see they were determined that I should miss the bus. Half an hour of obstruction made me do so. The day was ruined, so I settled down in the watch-house to endure another examination and watch my luggage being mauled about by irritating Fascists.

It struck me that I had intended to repack my luggage and plates, so I laid the stuff out neatly in various heaps. I wrote out my reminder slips and pinned these on each parcel. I discarded old papers and any unwanted oddments. I got down to the job thoroughly under the eyes of the officer of the guard, who spoke perfect English. He had been to school in England to learn the language, he said. He should have known better, having seen how decent our customs officers are to foreigners. After the first two hours of waiting I smiled to myself to think that these little twerps nearly succeeded in making me wild, trying to spoil the end of a roving commission, with three kings, two queens and three princes in the bag.

I stowed away my parcels and asked the officer to mark these as passed, the while I got on with my laundry. During weeks of travelling I had accumulated a pile of soiled linen. Both the officer and his men now watched me with close interest while I made out a laundry list. Their eyes followed every item: twenty-seven collars, nine shirts, thirteen pairs of socks, badly in need of repair, fifteen handkerchiefs, three suits of underwear, and a white summer coat. The operation seemed to fascinate them.

And so we went till aperitif time. I was prepared to continue like this for hours. They had wasted my day, so they could

waste theirs. But suddenly they got restive, and perhaps became aware that this was just a daft way of pulling their legs, having them stare at a travelling Englishman probing his secrets, even to his laundry. The officer suddenly decided that he had had enough, and stamped my passport with a vicious stab, almost cutting a hole in it. They wanted me out so that they could lock up for lunch.

Was I free to go? Of course, said the officer, tightening and pulling his uniform straight before strutting across the road.

I dawdled over the fastening of my bags and hung it out to explosion point. They cleared me out of their watch-house and dumped my bags on the concrete outside. I placed the lot in a neat pile and followed them over to the café opposite. Instead of finding a company of care-free Italians, as in the old days, I found a most unfriendly lot, and was the focus of a concentrated glare from them. This Fascism certainly changes people.

In the late afternoon I caught another coach. As soon as my baggage was stowed away in the deep racks, two young Fascists, pistols in their belts, ordered me to take it down again. Of course I refused, and explained that a thorough search had been made by the frontier guards. The rest of the passengers looked as if they could knife me as the cause of the delay. Another officer was fetched who spoke French. The more excited he became the more back answers I gave.

I asked him why they were making a deliberate attack on a harmless Englishman, a friend of Italy. Did he not know that all our first-class hotels and restaurants, cafés and ice-cream soda fountains, and barrel-organs complete with monkeys, were run by Italians, and that we welcomed them all? The officer paused and listened. I carried on in French, which gave me more scope for hand play. Then I guessed one of the reasons for all this obstruction. Why did I not salute the Duce, as all other foreigners did? Why should I ask the thousands of Italians to salute our King on every trifling occasion?

After some further delay I managed to persuade the officer that in spite of their unpleasantness to me we in England would always be kind to foreigners. We had never quarrelled with Italy, and never wanted to. Every Italian gets a good job and a welcome in England. So my luggage was returned into the coach and off we went, everybody missing their trains.

At last I got on my way, glad to reach friendly France once more. I broke the journey in Paris to meet old friends, relieved to see that no signs of the new order had affected Frenchmen, official or otherwise. I regret to say that there were more signs of the new order in my own country, but as yet nothing to interfere with the ordinary life of the people.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### AN ASSIGNMENT IN NAZI GERMANY—BRITISH FASCISTS COME INTO THE OPEN

WHEN THE GERMANS STOLE THE Gordon Highlanders' drums at Ostend they exhibited these in the German War Museum. For years nothing was done about it. Then a Scotsman saw the relics in the Unter den Linden and told General Sir Ian Hamilton, who conceived the idea of inducing the German War Office to hand them back to the Gordons as a gesture of peace towards their old enemies. Everything went according to plan, and the General and Colonel of the Gordon Highlanders went to Berlin. A ceremony was made of the handing over. I was sent to cover the job.

Since my last visit to Germany I found a complete change had taken place. Then Hitler was but a nasty little joke parading his brown boy scouts wherever he could. But now Nazism was in power everywhere. You could hear Hitler shrieking through every loud speaker. If you asked a man the time up went his arm fully extended in a salute.

"Heil Hitler, it is half-past seven," he would say.

The Italians were a nuisance, but here in Berlin it was worse, for everybody Heiled for no reason. Even the head waiter Heiled Hitler when he gave you the menu. Apart from the fact that I never could stomach giving queer signs, and certainly not those melodramatic salutes on every occasion, I knew nothing of the new order in Germany and how it affected ordinary people. Everybody had to jump to it, and Hitler's name was not long out of anybody's mouth. So here comes the first shock.

When I reached the German War Office to photograph General Romberg handing back the Highlanders' drums, I could not get in. Police and soldiers were everywhere. What a chump I looked, until a fluke saved me. The Colonel of the Gordon Highlanders was the last to arrive. I stepped between him and another officer, hurriedly explaining the position. Even then I was stopped at the main door, and I had to tell the thick-necked Nazi that I had been specially sent by King George the Fifth, and made as if to produce credentials. The Colonel was a friend indeed, and stood by me until the danger was past.

Once inside the main hall, although the ceremony had not begun, I exposed plenty of plates on the British and German generals, meeting for the first time after the Great War. They clasped hands before a background of glitter and of grim-faced officers. Decorations and swords were the main features of the pictures. A peace gesture? You should have seen their faces as they watched General Hamilton, with his perfect deportment and easy, charming conversation. The Germans looked a bunch of stiff-necked clod-hoppers alongside him.

On the steps outside the War Office were the German Press, clamouring to get inside. What I feared would happen did happen. They were so annoyed at my getting in, they had put their case to the police. The next thing we knew was the big door opening and a crowd of Press-photographers flowing into the salon, nearly swamping the ceremony. Instead of getting their pictures, they pointed me out as the villain of the piece. Then of course we were all turned out. A pretty scene there was on the steps of the War Office.

With all the rumpus going on I just wanted to fade out of the picture. They would not let me. That an Englishman should get inside that holy of holies overshadowed the object of the journey from England. There was no peace gesture here. Then again I came up against the saluting business. Why did I not salute the Fuhrer? All other foreigners did, except the Englishmen, they said.

"What the hell! Do we try to make Germans in England sing our national anthem and salute King George?" I asked them.

I sang a few bars to them, with my hand at the salute. Humour? Not a sign of it in their white, grim faces. Then some one said I would be put in the *Gefängnis*. That certainly made me shiver for a moment, for I had had too much experience of their prisons. What a memory that remark revived: the bitterness of three wasted years enduring their wretched prisons. During this discussion the so-called secret police were hovering about and taking in every word.

"Prison? You can't show me worse prisons than I was in during the war. Come with me and I'll show you the best and the worst of your Berlin prisons," I said.

Now we were getting a crowd with a vengeance. To my surprise, some of the photographers and reporters followed me into a big taxi. I told the driver to make for Stadvogtei, really

Berlin's best prison in my day, and the last I occupied for many dreary months. Why does one do such things? Heaven only knows. It must be the accumulated irritation engendered by the arrogance of the Germans. They can never forget themselves. They challenge you too often, and then you tell them to go to hell.

We arrived at the prison and rang the bell. The peep-hole opened, and a face wanted to know what we wanted. I wanted to come back to the prison where I had once enjoyed peace and solitude, I said. The face glared at me and asked me if I was mad. Then the door opened, and in we walked. Just inside the doors, where we prisoners were driven in generally at night, to vanish without trace until it pleased the German Kommandantur to push us on to another prison, stood a smiling official!

I gasped with surprise as he came forward with outstretched hand to greet me very effusively! My irritation slipped from me, and I responded as he led us inside the office where we used to be stripped and searched and our dossier examined. This seemingly decent German explained to me that Stadvogtei was no longer a prison, but was now the headquarters of the Central European Bureau for the Investigation of the Dope Traffic. That is the nearest translation I can give of the long title I read on the door. Germans use the longest words, the longest titles and the longest sentences. Maximilian Harden wrote in sentences running to a page of his *Zukunft*. By the time you had got to the end of it you had lost the meaning of the beginning. I mention this because I first read him in this prison.

The smiling German led the way along the corridors from one floor to another until we came to the top, and there was my old cell—a cell no longer, but the commissar's office! I pressed a button on the door-jamb and the old taxi flag still worked. When you pressed the button a red metal arm plomped down on the corridor side of the wall to call the attention of the guards, always on duty. They did not like suicides, especially messy ones, which meant a general clean-up. There was no other method, only knives or glass, for the bars prevented prisoners throwing themselves through a window. One of my old colleagues left this job until he was on his way back to England, and jumped off the ship just as it was docking at Tilbury.



You should have seen the effect on the German pressmen watching me going about my old home. The small barred window, high in the wall, from which I could glimpse a few inches of sky and occasionally a Zeppelin returning from a journey to England, was in its original shape. The German photographers recovered from their surprise and asked the commissar if they might snap me in my old cell. Then I took a few pictures, showing all manner of things, from bedsteads to powder-puffs, in which dope was smuggled to England by Armenians. The chief unlocked his filing cabinets and showed me batches of confidential correspondence from the British Home Office, with reports on the movements of international dope agents. All kinds of curious things were shown to us.

Two facts stick in my memory: Armenians were the most troublesome and cunning dope agents, and also that during the hour and a half we were in Stadvogtei, Hitler and his Nazis never got a mention nor a salute! And it all ended up with a wonderful lunch at the Bristol Hotel, with Kretschmar, once famous manager of the Adlon, looking after us. Yes, the Germans are full of surprises. Once free of outside show they can be as pleasant and interesting as the rest of the human race.

They secured a passage for me in the *Bremen*, that super-de-luxe liner, use of the best suite, and my meals in the special Café Parisian, the first restaurant afloat with real mosaics on its walls. A Frenchman was in charge, and he could not have entertained better. The voyage was all too short. There was everything on that ship. An Englishman had the choice of seventeen kinds of tea! They even grew some of their own vegetables.

I took several pictures of the new stream-lined funnels. There were few passengers. The next best suite was given to General Sir Ian Hamilton and the Colonel of the Gordons taking back the old drums, the reason for the peace gesture.

### BRITISH FASCISTS COME INTO THE OPEN

Imagine my surprise to find that almost over-night the British Fascists had come into the open, and were blatantly standing at street corners selling their party papers. I saw big parades of ex-service men and also non-soldiers who had been smitten by the new order. There was some talk of Mussolini coming to England on a mission of friendship. Thank heaven there was

a little wisdom shown in Whitehall, for the visit never materialised. These uniformed British variety of Fascists were certainly throwing their weight about, and were quite frank in telling any of us who would listen that they were just waiting for The Day! Everywhere I went to take pictures in England I saw the same uniform, even in good old stolid Bristol. There I saw four at the tramway centre handing out their papers free, with a few well-chosen bits of propaganda. Their self-assurance was amazing. They certainly succeeded in getting hold of thousands of young men, and drilled them into converts under the new gospel.

It was bad enough to be messed about by foreigners on their own ground, but to be irritated by these Mosleyites when on a job made my blood boil. This was the time when the influence was creeping into the newspaper offices, directing what should and what should not be said. Nothing must be said against Hitler or Mussolini. Mayfair went all out for the new movement, and attended the parades and the massed meetings. The Black-shirts made full use of the Union Jack for all occasions. The wealthy contributed generously to the fighting funds, as these were called. To fight whom? I wondered.

The boxes in the Albert Hall were packed with British society, Members of Parliament, famous actors and writers, ex- and active officers, and even Cabinet Ministers, watching Mosley's theatrical shows. Although I could not make head or tail of the subject-matter, he was a good speaker, had the handsome personality of a film star, and, in fact, was the perfect Quisling in the making.

At one of these spell-binding demonstrations I got a fine selection of big names in the bag. After I had flashed one full box from the back, I was followed by a stocky figure. When I hurried down the back corridors he ran after me and asked me if I had photographed him. I admitted that I had got him bang in the middle of the picture. Then I saw who it was: the most anti-Fascist writer, and a fellow member of the National Union of Journalists, Mr. H. G. Wells! We returned to the box and I took another picture, and then handed him the first plate. Yes, I was honest, and destroyed the real plate. Mr. Wells said he had just come to take a look at the new movement. We always make Mr. Wells produce his union card, which he invariably does, whether he be in the Café Royal or at any meeting or function. It is a joke with a serious meaning, and he always takes it well.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### MOSLEY—CONSCIENCE STORY—I LEAVE FLEET STREET

IN PASSING, HERE ARE A FEW close-ups as I knew him. And I think I know why he went crackers over that international gang of would-be world conquerors. I met him first at a Harrow cricket match on speech day. I had enough pictures of arrogant little snobs when a tall, handsome figure came towards me. His silk hat, perfectly cut morning coat and the various items of uniform which the best man at a wedding must wear made him a first-class sartorial picture. An old Harrovian, of course, and I might need one shortly to help out a parents' picture.

"Do you know that I am the youngest member of the House of Commons," were his first words to me.

I banged off a plate on him and asked him his name. He winced, and the smile vanished. Sir Oswald Mosley was his name, he said, and I made him spell it properly. He had his little axe to grind, so I used him sometimes to brighten up a dull picture at a social event. He was willing to do anything—kiss babies, stroke prize-dogs at shows, pretend to eat the biggest apple grown by the oldest inhabitant, or any other of the little odd jobs we have ready for them. He was published as the youngest member of the House of Commons, and a real blue-blooded Conservative. Although he was a colossal snob, he was not a bad sort, in those days.

Then he married a beautiful lady with a wonderful personality. And this is no pressman's patter, either. Lord Curzon's daughter was a true blue-blooded democrat. I often met them at functions when Sir Oswald was developing his political ideas. And how he developed! Not long after this I photographed him again, full of the joy of changing his party.

Next time I met him he was on his way to becoming a socialist. One picture showed him with Sir Robert Horne, talking the closest of secrets. Not so very long after this I took a picture of Sir Oswald Mosley as a pal of Ramsay MacDonald. He was moving fast now. Fleet Street could not keep up with him. He seemed to be sliding down the political chute. In spite of all his changes, he still seemed a decent sort of chap.

Then came the change. A terrible tragedy happened. The beautiful lady died, a shock to everyone who had met her. Then the other tragedy happened. The Sir Oswald as we knew him died also. It was when I was in Spain I read of some queer sort of movement starting, which at first I did not associate with Fascism. When I returned, one look round told me the worst. The mystery was cleared up one Sunday after I had lunched with the famous banquet manager, Sabatini, who took me to hear Signor Gayda, later famous as Mussolini's mouthpiece.

That afternoon I saw an extraordinary demonstration of dramatic oratory—the first massed meeting of British and Italian Fascists. The speaker was introduced on a very quiet note. He took up a modest pose on the stage. At first his voice could hardly be heard.

I had dozed off, only to be awakened by the most extraordinary flow of words, which could have filled Wembley Stadium, so great was the volume. That figure on the stage grew to a giant. Although I did not understand the language, I was amazed by the fanatical fervour of the audience, composed of British Blackshirts. No rioting here, for all were fanatics. Staid old Sabatini was a white-hot disciple of the new gospel, and not afraid to preach it to his customers. That was the cause of his downfall. I asked him what the speech was about, but he was too excited to tell me. We returned to the hotel and had a few drinks to recover from the dramatic spell-binder. But I was never asked again. The dope did not take on me. Poor old Sabatini came to a dreadful end—drowned while being taken to Canada as a prisoner of war.

A week later I was sent to photograph Sir Oswald Mosley at the Piccadilly Hotel. He was to tell the "City" what was going to happen to their business when he got his new system working in England. Oh yes, they would fall in with his ideas all right. Such assurance he showed! Yes, things had gone as far as that, and the leader's confidence was unbounded.

Only a few nights before this City meeting I had enjoyed the annual banquet given by the champion jockey, Gordon Richards, who seemed always to be giving the annual banquet as a penalty for having ridden the most winners of the season. The gourmets' annual function was not in it for abundance and quality—champagne flowing in a steady bubbling stream from beginning

to end. Pressmen were treated as colleagues, and some of us were driven to our homes afterwards.

What a different scene I found now! Sir Oswald perched on a railed rostrum and the same banquetting hall packed with City men. Insurance magnates, bank directors, company promoters, brokers and assessors—the cream of that mysterious fraternity whose stock in trade was money—packed that hall. Sir Oswald was about to tell them their job in the new order.

I got there with my candid camera to photograph the reactions on the faces of those sceptical City men as they listened to their destiny. Sir Oswald made his speech. He brought out his usual theatrical stuff, and finished up with a well-worked-up peroration. Usually he was greeted with feverish cheering, but here, when he had nearly burst himself with eloquence, his words brought only a stony silence—in fact, his words fell on stony ground. I never could make sense of what he said, and I had heard him scores of times. I looked round to see the effect on the City—just bewilderment. Their expressions made funny pictures, rigid and unbelieving. Mosley had another go at them, and produced a deeper silence. He became slightly rattled. Perhaps they would like to ask some questions, he suggested condescendingly.

The City obliged, and asked several very searching questions. Not one was answered well enough for the hard-headed business men. Then Mosley began to banter his audience—the worst brick he ever dropped. He showed his ignorance of anything to do with insurance and banking and tried to laugh it off.

“Sir, don’t talk nonsense; you have still to answer the questions you invited,” came a very sharp voice, cutting through Mosley’s guff like an icy blast.

Whatever Mayfair liked to think of the spell-binder, the City would not wear him at any price. The voice steadied Sir Oswald, and he soon went up to his cocky note again. That was the queer thing about Mosley. I have never heard him answer a straightforward question on vital matters. Like most politicians, he got all his applause from wordy platitudes. His answers were always long, rambling statements keyed in the usual arrogant note that hides his ignorance.

“There is no question to answer in this case,” said Mosley, “for money in the form exploited by the City, and all your

other problems, will not exist." This is a sample of his answers. One quiet old banker told the speaker that as yet he had not replaced Parliament, and that he was not likely to with such nonsense.

Then Sir Oswald appealed for more questions—something practical, he said. As the meeting seemed to be dragging, and as no one else seemed to want to ask anything, I asked if I might put a question. Very patronisingly he told me to carry on.

I reminded Sir Oswald how I had once known him as the youngest member of Parliament, a Conservative. Later I had met him about to become a Liberal. Then he became a friend of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's, and a Socialist. There was a pause. "And now we see you in a party of your own invention. All that we ordinary bread-and-butter people would like now is a little warning. For you see how bewildered not only are we, but also the City, which usually understands everything. We are caught unawares. So, Sir Oswald, would you please give us some indication of your next political activity, so that we can all prepare for it?"

That was all I said, and it was all it took to dissolve that very serious crowd of hard-faced City men into roars of laughter. The meeting just melted away to the bars and on to the street. Sir Oswald never smiled at me again.

There were many incidents after that meeting, and several of my colleagues had their cameras smashed, besides being beaten up by the thugs Mosley had gathered around him. I was a marked man, and soon knew it. The first time I knew it was when I was taking some pictures of hundreds of Blackshirts giving the Fascist salute to their leader as he appeared on the roof of a car. Those hundreds of upraised, quivering hands made a scene reminiscent of the crowds in "Ben Hur". As I put my camera away an arm was thrown round my neck and I was held in a lock. I struggled, but I could not get out of it. There was much laughter at my embarrassment. But there is always a way, even if your hands are tied. I dare not let go my camera.

With my heel I felt for the pair of feet behind me. Then with all the venom inside me I crashed my heel down on to his toes. I must have smashed them, for his shoes were of the softest of leather. That body dropped from me like a snake which is slowly strangling you until you reach for its tail and

break it. No reptile of any species can stand this. Try it when the time comes. No one interfered with me as the creature jumped about holding his foot. I wondered why the police did not interfere in these rough pranks of the Blackshirts.

The leader and his thugs became bolder. I tried to side-step them. In our job a few scraps and rough treatment are taken as part of the day's work. But who was going to stop these thugs, already wrecking shops and beating up their owners in the East End? I began to wonder if the police were afraid of them, so I tested it in Chelsea.

Two old people who had paid no rent for years were ejected from their rooms. Although the landlord was as poor as his tenants, Sir Oswald and his minions took this as a good opportunity to show themselves as friends of the poor. Ignoring the police, they fetched back the goods and chattels of the ejected pair, forcibly entered the house, and re-established them after flinging the owner into the street! Here was a sample of things to come.

My chief sent me to see what it was all about. It certainly was a story. When I went to the house the Blackshirts were defending it, one on each side of the door and several outside on the pavement. They barred my way in to see the old couple, and said that the leader had ordered that no photographs were to be taken. All I could get as a picture was one of the ejected owner of the house. And I could *not* get into that house to photograph the old couple in their home.

There was a crowd outside, and the police stood off at the end of the street. Although at this time our Press cards issued by Scotland Yard were of no use, I pulled mine out from habit. I told the sergeant and constables what the Blackshirts had told me—that they took no notice of the police, whose day was now over. To get action, I added some embellishments. They looked stupidly at me at first, so I added more fuel to the tiny blaze I had started. I showed the card again, and read out the instructions to help pressmen.

Suddenly the sergeant made up his mind, and started for the scene. It was pretty to watch. The police dispersed the crowd as only London police can, without the aid of bludgeons and pistols. They swept away the Blackshirt thugs as if they had never been there. One cocky little twerp toppled over into the garden. Just one or two quick movements, and all was

normal again. I photographed the old couple and their landlord reunited, and gave them ten bob. Civic liberty was saved again.

My last experience was the worst, and one Blackshirt thug was nearly killed by me—one of the most peaceable creatures on earth. Irritation had now grown into venomous hostility. The Mosleyites thought they were winning, and were more arrogant than ever. I tried to side-step Mosley's biggest meeting at Olympia. As there was no other operator in the office, the chief said I would have to cover it. He handed me a large, well-printed permit with the usual propaganda pamphlets.

When I entered Olympia I could see that it was Sir Oswald's greatest effort. The building made a wonderful setting for his theatrical display of oratory. There was unlimited height for his long, gaudy draperies, hung above his altar—for that is what it resembled. Bertram Mill's Circus had left the huge arena still intact for the meeting. I admit that it was terrific, and not a seat was vacant. Before I could pull out my camera I saw two women dragged out by their hair and screaming, while a man tried to rescue them. He was kicked in the stomach for his trouble. They picked him up and threw him outside as he recovered. It seemed a mystery to me why the police allowed disorderly scenes.

There stood Sir Oswald Mosley in the centre of the stage, a magnificent figure in a lavishly dressed background, pouring out his hot words to the most receptive assembly which ever sat in Olympia. Again in the best seats and boxes were the social celebrities and leaders in other spheres watching and listening. I studied their faces as they watched the rough stuff below. They looked on in the same way as they watch an animal being torn to shreds by the hounds at the end of a hunt. One party of ladies could not quite contain their feelings, and shuddered as they watched some poor questioner torn from her seat and hurled over the heads of the audience down the circus tiers. A few tried to laugh it off, but it only amounted to a nervous affectation.

From behind I took two general views. I moved very circumspectly, and just wanted to get sufficient pictures to cover the story and get away without a battle. As I moved from the balcony to the arena another scuffle took place near me. I dropped a plate on it, and then retired to the balcony to the



small staff bar in the corner. After a drink, while I put my camera away, I planned a quiet escape through the staff entrance.

Suddenly in came a section of Blackshirts and their leader. "There he is!" shouted one. They called for my camera. I backed against the wall, and asked them what the trouble was. The barmaid turned ghastly, as she had already seen some incidents. I showed my permit. No bloody use, as the police used to say about our Press passes. So this was it, I thought, going cold inside, looking at the half-dozen thick-necked thugs. One made a grab for the strap of my camera-case.

"Tell me what you want, but don't lay hands on me," I warned them.

I managed to hold them off. The troop leader had an idea, and said the leader wanted to see me. I had taken photographs which were forbidden, he said. "All right; lead the way, and I will follow," I said. They marched me across the wide balcony, down between the tiers of seats, right to the centre of the arena. The audience were still at fever pitch, for and against the speaker, and the meeting looked like developing into a free fight. I stood between the hefty bodyguards obediently, with my eye in the direction of the front entrance, away under the gallery of seats.

Again they wanted my camera, and tried to take my strap from my shoulder. Another troop leader brought down a message from Mosley. "Take him to the guard-room," he said. They marched me towards the front balcony. The front door was not far off, so I tensed myself ready for a scramble to get away. They stopped in the tunnel for a moment muttering, then went on. Again I was told to march, and we went on through the tunnel—to get free of all this foolery, I hoped. We came out on to the concrete, where a dozen more Blackshirts were waiting for us. There was no one else about—no police, and not one member of the public.

As they came towards me I knew I was for it. I backed against the barricade. Everything wicked surged up inside me. Suddenly I yelled at the top of my voice:

"Are there any free Englishmen here?"

Fear amplified my voice and made it echo round the walls. To the thugs I said:

"The first man who touches me dies."

They paused. The biggest pushed forward and demanded

my camera. I knocked his hand away as he tried to grab the strap and shifted my position along the wall. Back of me I could still hear the commotion in Mosley's meeting. Away to the left I heard a clatter of feet hurrying round the corner. From the corner of my eye I could see three figures running towards me in time. I dared not take my eyes off the thugs, who were trying to decide how to beat me up. First one and then another would take a jab at me. As I felt the approach of the three, I shouted to them to take my camera and not get mixed up with whatever happened.

How I cursed those Blackshirt thugs! The vilest names poured from me. I went quite mad. Talk about seeing red! I stood with my back to that barricade waiting for the first man to put his throat between my fingers. That day there would have been one dead Fascist on whom to hold an inquest. What guts those three strangers gave me as I faced those scrapings of hell! All the incidents I had endured at their hands, the sight of men being kicked in the stomachs, women being manhandled, and above all that such things could happen in England, made me a potential murderer. My fingers quivered like talons.

They still held off in a muttering group. They glared at the three men, one holding my camera, the two others standing close to me like bull-dogs ready to fight to the death to help a cameraman! Sanity crept back into my brain. To our surprise, they still held off.

"Clear out of the way, you bloody rats. Come on, boys."

Turning to my rescue party for the first time, I told them to come with me, and out we marched, leaving that bunch of thugs intact. The rescuers were a carpenter, a tramwayman named Mecklenburg and Michael Wardell, managing editor of the *Evening Standard*. But for them there would have been another smashed camera, a battered photographer, and for certain one dead Blackshirt.

When we got outside Olympia my rescuers asked my name. Next day I got letters from them telling me what a grand show I had put up. Those letters are among the few I keep. The memory of Michael Wardell, all spick and span in bowler hat and umbrella, and the two workers ranging themselves alongside me ready to fight any odds did something to dispel the fear that Fascism could get a lasting hold in England.

## CONSCIENCE STORY

Whenever I have had a nasty set-back, or unfair treatment amounting to a frame-up, I accept these as reprisals for things left undone. What would you have done in a case like this?

I was covering a job on a novel chicken farm near Biggleswade. The movie man had asked me to do some speaking captions describing the special methods of fattening poultry for the table. The man in charge showed me how he forcibly fed the birds. The contrivance looked like a lathe. The operator held the bird with its mouth wide open and forced a thick rubber tube down its throat. When he had the victim positioned, he pulled a lever, which forced a feed of mealy stuff into the bird's craw—a revolting sight.

Much worse was to follow. After the man had withdrawn the tube, he broke off the bird's beak! I felt as if he were tearing off my finger-nails. Then he flung the bird to the ground stupefied with pain. I saw the red, quivering flesh begin to bleed. His callous manner made me see red too. I asked him why he did this. Just so that the bird could not pick up anything from the floor, as was its life's habit. I asked him if he would like his toe-nails torn off. He laughed—yes, just laughed—and said the birds did not feel the pain. The sight of a live chicken being chucked about markets always brings back that memory.

The proprietor was a friend of mine, one of the biggest aircraft manufacturers of the Great War. I asked him if that savage treatment was necessary. That's just how it's done, he said, with not the slightest feeling or interest. I discussed the matter with a few friends, and all I got was the advice not to poke my nose into other people's affairs.

At the first opportunity I discussed the matter with a R.S.P.C.A. official, but he was not at all impressed. Nor was anyone else. I am slipping these few lines in here hoping that some one will be interested who feels the same way as I do. Or am I just a crank? I can see myself developing into a crank, even a fanatic, if I meet with any more of this unseen cruelty. When we kept poultry in the country they were our pets. My grandmother reared them, but could not eat them. She once tried to eat a slice of chicken, but she said it made her feel like a cannibal. The daily egg was all she expected from her hens for plenty of good chicken food enjoyed in the natural way.

## I LEAVE FLEET STREET

After the last and longest European roving commission I was recalled to London, although I tried to make the chief believe I should remain in Berlin, Paris, Madrid or Moscow ready for the crash. I knew there was bound to be a flare-up shortly. The chief believed me, but those higher up did not.

It was nice to be among the lads again, but after a few weeks of the social round of christenings, weddings, funerals and the other odd jobs in the diary I knew for routine work, I was spoilt for ever. The chief put me on evening duty—the easiest turn. I arrived in the office at four and read the papers after a day's tennis or gardening. At five I had a drink and a talk with the day lads, a game of darts or shove-halfpenny. Then back to the office. Some evenings I might be rushed off to a fire, but before I could reach it those efficient London fire-fighters had put it out, leaving me only the embers to photograph. None of the grand blaze and heroic rescues you got in other cities.

Even a plane-crash produced nothing special in the way of pictures—just a story with a sad ending. When I got to the scene after a rush round the country-side I just flashed the burnt-out plane and collected portraits of the victims. No thrill in this, and it was so easy I began to put on weight!

Several times I tried to coax the chief to put me off the lead again to roam the Continent. I could feel the cold calm before the storm, for I read the German and French newspapers regularly. I must have been the only one to do so, for no one could believe there would be war. I knew that the only United Nation, the Germans, and their leader, a colossal secret society, were only waiting until they had prepared to the last button to make war.

While waiting for the war of the ages I suggested to the chief that I sought adventure in another sphere. Having lived in hotels so long, I had an idea of buying one and running it as I liked. I thought of the score of features I did not like in English hotels. The public should eat hot food when *they* liked, specially cooked for them, with all the flavours left in, and not side-tracked to the flavour-destroying hot-plate. I would have no stock-pot, which sends the smell of the steerage galley through the restaurant. The soups must be made fresh every day, of ingredients not left over. Chickens must be cooked on hori-

zontal jacks before log fires. The same with joints of beef and saddles of mutton. There must be no gong for any purpose. The guests would be encouraged to have their breakfast in bed if they wanted it. In any case, early morning tea would be served in their bedrooms without extra charge. And not one extra would be charged on my bills. Even telephone calls would be free. There must be no "TIME" called in the bars by roaring barmen. Nor would these necessary evils be allowed to measure drinks into tiddling little glasses, with their big backs as cover turned to the customers.

Above all, my slogan must be, HOT FOOD AT ANY HOUR, inlaid in a large doormat to greet the customer. Doors must always be open, and log fires always crackling. Achieving this meant adventure in the unknown world of hotels. On my way round England I carried a list of hotels for sale. I viewed the lot and marked one down. The publisher is now calling "TIME". His paper ration has run out. So good-bye until we meet at ROYAL HOTEL.

Acc No.	20421
Class No.	G. H.
Book N.	88

